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IN PRAISE OF EARLY NIGHTS

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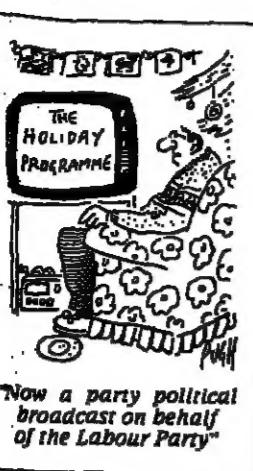
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Blair and family steal away for a break in the Seychelles



BY NICHOLAS WATT AND STEPHEN FARRELL

TONY BLAIR has set aside the burdens of office and discreetly whisked his family away to the Seychelles for a week's holiday.

Accompanied by his wife, Cherie, and three children, and Gale Booth, his mother-in-law, the Prime Minister landed yesterday morning on the picturesquely island of La Digue after an overnight flight from Gatwick. This is the Blairs second foreign holiday since the election.

They have rented a lodge in the grounds of an old plantation house owned by President René of the Seychelles. The house, called La Grande Case, gained notoriety

when it was used as the setting for the steamy film *Goodbye Emmanuel*. The lodge the Blairs have rented is not owned by the President and will cost £200 a day.

The Prime Minister's break in the sun was kept under such tight wraps that many staff in Downing Street had no idea that the Blairs had sneaked away on Sunday night. One press officer, who was asked about the whereabouts of the Prime Minister yesterday morning, said: "He's at Chequers."

The Blairs flew out on an Air Seychelles flight from Gatwick on Sunday night, landing at Mahé, the main island of the Seychelles, ten and a half hours later. The prime ministerial party, including body-



La Digue, where the Blairs have rented a £200-a-day lodge

guards and aides, booked weeks in advance and occupied business-class seats on the Boeing 767-200. The full fare for each adult is £2,911, with a 30 per cent discount for young children. Euan, 13, and

Nicholas, 12, are both over the age limit and would have travelled as adults. The Blairs paid for their own tickets, but the travel costs of the police and civil servants, who are in charge of setting up a communica-

tions link, were met through the public purse. As business-class customers the party would have been offered courtesy champagne and a choice of wines to accompany their meal.

After landing, the party would have had a chance to glimpse the tropical sun before they transferred to 20-minute charter flights to La Digue. Each helicopter, carrying only four passengers, costs £1,000 to charter one way.

Downing Street sources had earlier said that Mr Blair planned to spend Christmas at Chequers, the Prime Minister's country retreat. However, Mr Blair let slip to journalists two days before Christmas that he might take the family

away for a few days if the opportunity presented itself.

Labour sources, aware that traditional party supporters may not appreciate the sight of the Prime Minister soaking up the Indian Ocean sun, were at pains to point out that the holiday would give Mr Blair a well-earned rest and provide a chance to spend time with his children.

In addition, Mr Blair also intends to have talks with Seychelles government officials. He made the acquaintance of President René during the recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Edinburgh.

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Patten eyes new role as mayor of London

BY VALERIE ELLIOTT, WHITEHALL EDITOR

CHRIS PATTEN admitted publicly for the first time last night that he might like to become the elected mayor of London "if the job was right".

But the last Governor of Hong Kong added that if the job were wrong, no politician of any class from any party would be interested.

In an interview with *The Times* Mr Patten said: "No one knows what the job is going to be. If it is just a bit of political under-chaining or choosing someone who will be a transmission mechanism for decisions taken by Gordon Brown or John Prescott, then it is going to be difficult to find politicians and non-politicians from the left, right and centre, of real class who would want to do it."

"It does depend — not just for me, but for other people, too — on what the job looks like. I am sure, however, if the job is right — and if it is true the Conservative Party will run a London-wide primary to choose a candidate — that would be an extremely attractive thing to do."

Mr Patten, in London to oversee the decorating of his new family home in Barnes, conceded that he "liked running things" and said that he might be interested in further jobs in the public service. But he is clearly undecided about his political future, and whether he should try to return to Westminster as an MP.

"That is the 110 per cent, 18-carat honest answer. I really have not come to a firm conclusion and I don't want to seem to be grand about it. The notion that Conservative grandees can be

parachuted into constituencies has been exploded with regular hilarity. You try and get parachuted in and you end up breaking both legs."

He was also keen to kill any speculation that he intended to stand against William Hague for the Conservative Party leadership. Mr Hague would lead the party "for a very long time", he said, adding: "No one has ever discussed the Tory leadership with me and if they were to attempt to do so, they would get short shrift. I think one of the things the Conservative Party has to realize is the importance of self-discipline and loyalty."

His own future will depend largely on what happens to the family's beloved Norfolk terriers, Whisky and Soda. Mr Patten is determined to continue his campaign to reverse the quarantine rules which prevent him bringing them home. In the meantime, the pets are being looked after by "kind, dog-loving" friends near the Pattens' country house in southwest France.

The extent to which we can base ourselves back in Britain will be affected in part by the quarantine regulations. Without our dogs, life would be very difficult. I certainly do not want to put them in quarantine. It is such a stupid policy, with no scientific basis for it, any more."

Pointedly referring to the death in quarantine of the former Governor of Bermuda's dog, he added: "People say you should not be soppy about animals but they become part of the family."

Patten interview, page 2



Chris and Lavender Patten with their daughter's cocker spaniel Clio. Their own dogs are in France

Voting delayed
Voting in Kenya's elections was extended by a further 24 hours in some areas after flooding and accusations of vote-rigging
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Plea to Straw as reporter in drugs exposé is arrested

BY STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

THE *Mirror* journalist who claimed to have bought drugs from a senior minister's son was arrested yesterday for possession of cannabis.

Dawn Alford, 30, was arrested when she arrived at Kensington police station in south London with another *Mirror* journalist and a lawyer to give police the cannabis and make a statement. She was bailed until February.

Mrs Alford was arrested on the advice of the Crown Prosecution Service, apparently because of the length of time the drugs were held. The alternative would have been to question her under caution and release her.

The *Mirror* reported on Christmas Eve that she had been sold 1.92 grams of cannabis resin in a south London public house by the 17-year-old son of a Cabinet minister. The youth, who has not been named because of his age, was taken to a police station by his parent, arrested and released on police bail.

A police officer on the whole case could be delivered to the

CPS within the next week. The general policy for minor drug offences is for the police to issue a caution, but if Miss Alford were charged and convicted, she would probably face a small fine.

Last night Piers Morgan, the editor of the *Daily Mirror*, attacked the decision to arrest his reporter and said that he would be appealing to Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, to intervene. Mr Morgan said: "This is an outrageous decision which is, in my opinion, specifically designed to deflect attention from the criminal activities of a Cabinet minister's son to the entirely justifiable methods deployed by a newspaper to uncover them."

He said the youth was not entrapped or "set up", but freely offered to supply cannabis and had admitted the criminal offence.

Mr Morgan said: "Our reporter was handed the substance at 11.30pm in a London pub and took it to a forensic laboratory the following morning to confirm it was cannabis. This is normal pro-

Baby Noel's mother found living rough

BY SIMON DE BRUXELLES

A WOMAN who abandoned her baby son at a council office two days before Christmas has been found wandering the streets in a confused state.

The mother, a married woman in her mid-20s, is, however, unlikely to be reunited with her son in the immediate future. The two-month-old child, whom police officers called Noel, spent Christmas with foster parents and is expected to join his mother's two other children in care.

Police said yesterday that

passers-by had alerted them to a woman wandering the streets of Totnes in a distressed and dishevelled state on Sunday lunchtime. She had apparently been living rough since handing her son to staff at the Civic Centre in Plym-

outh, telling them she could not cope.

Although she told officers she was Noel's mother, her story was so confused that it took several hours to establish that it was true. She told police that the baby's father had walked out two months before he was born.

She is now being looked after by social services who are trying to assess whether she can care for the child. In the meantime, the baby will remain with his foster parents, who have now stopped calling him Noel and started using his real name.

Inspector David Evans said that the mother had expressed concern about the child, but had not asked to see him yet.

Officers who visited her Housing Association home in Plymouth described it as "clean and in good order".

Baby "Noel" is still with foster family

Prisons chief to head Maze murder inquiry

BY AUDREY MAGRE, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE Northern Ireland office sought to restore confidence in security at the Maze last night by appointing the Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales to inspect the jail after the murder of loyalist leader Billy Wright.

General Sir David Ramsbotham will investigate Saturday's killing by members of the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) and how the weapons used to murder Wright, known as "King Rat", were smuggled into the supposedly high security jail on the outskirts of Belfast. He will report to the Government.

The appointment is part of a plan to tighten up security at the prison announced by Adam Ingram, the Northern Ireland Security Minister, during a press conference in the Maze yesterday.

Random weekly searches are being introduced immediately, it was announced. An inquiry into the escape of IRA man Liam Averill before Christmas will be extended to include the shooting of Wright. Mr Ingram said that the new measures, decided

upon during yesterday's conference of security and prison chiefs, chaired by Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, was designed to "do everything possible to prevent a repetition" of events such as the Wright killing. He said that there were no plans for resignations.

But the new measures will do little to satisfy Northern Irish community leaders, who complain bitterly that the prison system is lax and too greatly concerned with placating the jail's 560 republican and loyalist prisoners.

Finlay Spratt, chairman of the Northern Ireland Prison Officers' Association, welcomed the appointment of Sir David Ramsbotham but criticised the way the Maze has operated.

He said there should have already been regular random weekly searches. By announcing their introduction now the authorities were "damned by their own statement". The last full inspection of the prison was in July, after which loyalists set fire to their wing in

Continued on page 2, col 4

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Tories' forgotten man comes home to put his house in order

Chris Patten is back in town and already eyeing the political scene as he takes a year out to think and write a book, reports Valerie Elliott

CHRIS PATTEN, the former Governor of Hong Kong and Conservative Cabinet Minister, is back in town. Amid the tea chests and packing cases in his elegant new South London home overlooking Barnes Common, it is clear he is missing the political front line.

But with an appearance on BBC's *Today* programme yesterday, and more television interviews next month, Mr Patten is not going to become the forgotten man of British politics. He has given himself a year to write a book about the tiger economies of Asia, to take time out and to think, but he stresses he has not made up his mind what comes next.

His wife, Lavender, unpacking belongings in their kitchen, was hesitant about a political comeback. "I'd rather not. We've been through all that. But you can't stop people doing what they want to do. We'll wait and see."

Perhaps the public most remember the Pattens in tears — on the night in 1992 when he lost his seat as MP for Bath, and again in June this year as the Union Flag came down for the last time over Hong Kong.

The notion that Conservative grandees can be parachuted into constituencies has been exploded with regular hilarity. You try and get parachuted in and you end up breaking both legs," he said.

He would possibly like further jobs in the public service and said that he "liked running things". He is clearly intrigued at the possibility of standing as London's first elected mayor. "If I do decide to try to get back into Westminster politics, it's a big commitment. I would have to try to persuade an association to select me and to get re-elected."

Speaking around the old pine table in the kitchen of the four-storey mid-Victorian home — the only downstairs corner free from dust sheets — Mr Patten admitted he had received one or two approaches from constituency associations. "But as I have told people in public and private I wanted a year to write a book and to sort out my ideas, I am not going to make any snap decision on my future."

He has to write another 40,000 words of his book by

April; the study in his new home is ready. His days are spent writing — in longhand — with a break for lunch, followed by gardening or cycling, and then back to the pen at 4.30pm.

As he spoke, decorators were painstakingly brushing white paint on cornices and picture rails, and the Pattens' Filipino daily, Pearl, was getting the bedrooms shipshape.

Asked if he could work with William Hague, he immediately quipped: "Of course. I had a very good conversation with him in July when I last came back and I am meeting him in a few weeks' time. He is highly intelligent, he's already shown considerable capacity to take a longer-term view and is not being knocked out of his stride by unfair criticism. He is a good speaker and good in the House of Commons and will be leader of the Conservative Party for a very long time."

But would he feel comfortable with the present Conservative line-up on the backbenches? Were they his kind of Tories?

He spoke up for John Major who, he said, "will get very great notices in history", and Kenneth Clarke, "for whom I have the greatest respect".

The Conservative Party has always had two wings. If you don't use both wings you don't get off the ground. You don't fly. I may have spent a few years in the Far East but I am never going to be anything other than a liberal Tory."

The Pattens hope to return from their French country house more permanently after Easter. Their plans will be determined largely by their pens. Whisky and Soda, Norfolk Terriers, which the Pattens are determined to save from quarantine.

Mr Patten said: "Whisky especially has been unwell and has had an operation. We really cannot risk putting him in quarantine."

They are hoping the Government will change the existing regulations so they can be reunited as a family in their new home. For the moment the Pattens are enjoying the frolics of Clio, a black and white cocker spaniel belonging to their daughter Laura.



The public may most remember Chris Patten in tears, above at the handover of Hong Kong to China in June

Large blue and white Chinese pots awaiting plants and two elephant stools lined the terrace. They were reminders of a world away but Mr Patten showed he was still engrossed in British politics and the debate on welfare reform.

Tony Blair, he claimed, was addressing "a Conservative agenda" in his bid to reform the welfare state. It was not surprising this had "amazed and confused" his traditional supporters.

But Mr Patten said he had always believed that the welfare state needed tackling. He said welfare reform was

over the country was "to get a grip on the inexorable rise in public spending" and added that Mr Blair should tackle the problem on a cross-party basis.

The difficulty for the Labour Party, however, is that they are being consensual on alternate days. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, it's the Government of all the people and on the other days Mr Campbell [Alastair Campbell, Mr Blair's press secretary] and others are

lambasting their opponents.

He said welfare reform was

Mr Blair's "big test". He is a very intelligent and perceptive politician and he must know that the real question people have in their mind is if he stands for anything other than winning the next election.

"I think the sensible thing in the national interest is to assure the country they are serious on welfare reform. If they are not the results will be sad for the country and damaging to the Labour Government."

The Tories had already put the building-blocks in place for welfare reform, he said.

"But let's not forget that if the Tory Government had tried to do this they would have been denounced by the Labour Opposition up hill and down dale. That to some extent undermines the moral authority of Labour doing the job, and particularly with the wobblies in the Labour Party over it."

Mrs Patten did not rule out a return to the Bar, but was keeping an open mind. "I must do something," she said. She probably already foresees the dawn of a second era as political wife.

Question of allegiance in quangos vetting

BY VALERIE ELLIOTT, WHITEHALL EDITOR

PEOPLE applying for posts on public bodies and quangos could face tougher political vetting under plans being considered by Sir Len Peach, the Public Appointments Commissioner.

They might be asked how they voted at the election, whether they belong to a political party and if they have given any cash to a political party, over what period, and if it is above £250, £500 or £1,000.

But Sir Len Peach is concerned that far too many political questions will deter many people from applying for public appointments while his aim is to widen the net of potential recruits to the various bodies.

However he wants to test if people are being asked the right questions about political activity or whether a more intense grilling is necessary.

Before reaching any firm conclusions on future vetting Sir Len is to order a political survey next month of 500 people who have been ap-

pointed to NHS Trusts and various other public bodies since the Labour Government came to power.

He wants to find out exactly what political activity they undertook before applying and being appointed to a post.

He was concerned that a survey of appointments last year showed that only 10.3 per cent of those appointed admitted to any political activity and is anxious to ascertain if this is a true picture of appointments or if it represents an underestimate.

His move also follows a recommendation from Lord Nolan, the former public standards watchdog, who suggested that people should be asked about any "significant political activity" undertaken.

Lord Nolan ruled out how

ever asking people how they voted at the last election or whether they belonged to a political party on grounds of privacy.

But in his final report last summer before stepping down as chairman of the Committee

Maze killing inquiry

Continued from page 1

protest at the stricter regime. While not calling for resignations, Mr Spratt demanded a full review of the Government's attitude to the prison and prisoners.

Those people responsible for running the Northern Ireland Prison Service have to examine their consciences, they have been making concession after concession to the inmates, he said.

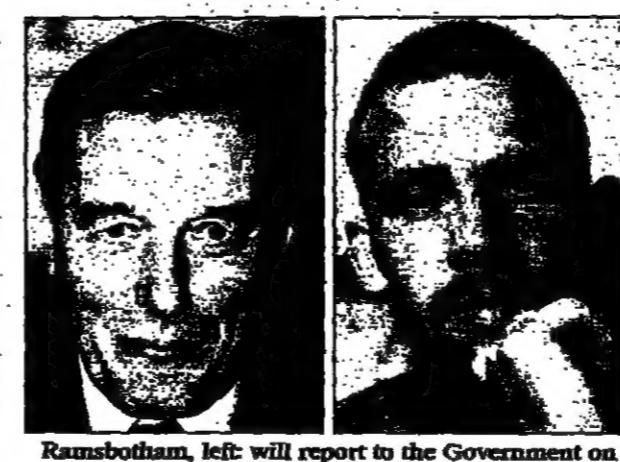
Anyone applying for an appointment is already quizzed about any political activity but there has been concern that the questions do now show if someone has canvassed for a party or given cash donations.

The present political vetting is also limited to the past five years and there is some concern that it should relate to a longer timespan.

Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, yesterday angrily rejected Tory claims that he is throwing business people off NHS trusts and replacing them with Labour supporters.

After Conservatives re-

leased details of people who have allegedly been removed from health trusts, Mr Dobson declared: "I'm not interested in replacing Tory deadheads with Labour deadheads."



Raunbortham, left, will report to the Government on the killing of Billy Wright, right, in the Maze.

But the prospect of a mugger regime is likely to be met with anger in the prison, particularly by the loyalist prisoners already disgruntled at the murder of one of their leaders.

Martin Moig, the prison's senior governor, admitted that the new weekly searches would have to be carried out with the cooperation of the prisoners. But he said he would not ask permission from prisoners' leaders and added: "If they do not cooperate I will have no option but to suspend visits for so long as they are opposing the searches."

John White, prison spokesman for the Ulster Democratic Party, said he would be fearful of the consequences of "collective punishment".

He is due to meet UDA and other prisoners in the Maze today to discuss the security situation.

Three men charged with

Wright's murder appeared in Lisburn Magistrate's Court amid tight security yesterday.

Christopher Michael Patrick McWilliams, 35, John Martin Gerard Kennedy, 35, and John Gleeson, 32, whose

addresses were all given as the

Maze prison, were also each

charged with the possession of two firearms, a Derringer .22 pistol, and a PA63 handgun

and a quantity of ammunition.

They were remanded in

custody to the Maze to re-ap-

pear in the prison court on

January 14.

Cartoon warning

Three cartoon characters inspired by the hit film *Toy Story* are spearheading a Government television campaign to cut the number of accidents caused by dangerous toys. The campaign will be broadcast to coincide with the sales when bargain hunters may be tempted to place cost above safety. The video warns parents that 36,000 children and a similar number of adults are injured by toys each year.

Diana letter 'forgery'

A letter suggesting that Diana, Princess of Wales, had been two months pregnant when she died was denounced as a forgery yesterday by hospital officials. The letter, published in *Interviu*, a Spanish news magazine, purports to be a doctor's report to Jean-Pierre Chevallat, the French Prime Minister, on a post-mortem examination at the Pitie-Salpêtrière hospital, where the Princess died.

£1,300 teddy bear stolen

An 8ft tall teddy bear dressed as a Buckingham Palace guard and weighing about 10 stone has been stolen. The £1,300 toy was taken from the Teddy Bear Shop in Birmingham City Centre. Manageress Wendy Buffey said she was amazed the bear had gone missing. "The bear stands guard at the door and can only be carried by two people. There's no way it would fit in a car."

£10,000 grant for otters

Wildlife experts have won a £10,000 grant to lure the otter back to the Yorkshire Dales. The money will provide suitable habitats at nine secret locations along the River Wharfe. The last otters in the area were killed by pollution during the 1940s. Half the money comes from the Millennium Trust; the rest from the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, Yorkshire Electricity and landowners.

Website omits Mandelson and keeps dome in the distance

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

THE Millennium Commission is spending £750,000 to take the Greenwich dome off the map. A new official website, being announced today, features a full-colour graphic of the United Kingdom giving a regional breakdown of how much is being spent in each part of the country.

But the dome, which is taking £449 million of lottery players' money, is missing. The commission has hired the image consultants Lloyd Northover Cignate to explain how it spends 5.6p of every National Lottery £1.17 — might start by pointing

out that this public relations blitz is costing lottery players up to £250,000 a year for the next three years, under the terms of their contract. The nine commissioners, led by Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, are keen to tell the public about the many worthy causes they support and to escape from what one official described as "the shadow of the dome".

During an exclusive preview, *The Times* quickly realised what a thorough job their consultants had done. A surfer could spend hours browsing on the website without finding a mention of Greenwich. As for Peter

Mandelson, the Minister Without Portfolio who is hosting the year-long extravaganza on the Meridian, there is not a peep.

When the Home page is called up, a capital 'M', the Millennium Commission's new logo, rises from behind an orange slash in the top left-hand corner of the screen. We clicked the 'News' icon to find only two items, one announcing the new website, the other dealing with a "National Space Centre" in Leicester.

Next, the map. This has orange squares for each major project. There were two in London. We clicked on the easternmost and summoned a

picture of the Tate Gallery of Modern Art. The western square was the British Museum Great Court.

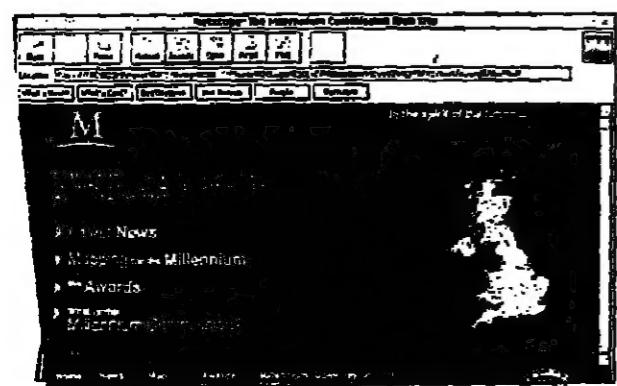
Clicking on "Awards", we read about grants of £200,000 or more which go to individuals for self-improvement. These were illustrated with a picture of women waving their hands in the air.

Turning to "What is the Millennium Commission?", the same ecstatic women were pictured but this time someone had remembered to put a caption underneath. The photograph was showing "The first 120 successful Millennium Awards Scheme individuals" celebrating the

announcements of their Millennium Awards."

Here at last there was a brief mention of Greenwich. Another passing reference to the dome was found by clicking "Millennium Festival". This would be held in the dome.

The commission's website is at <http://www.millennium.gov.uk>. "Britain is leading a drive to stop the internet being used for secret links between gangs including paedophile rings and terrorist networks," Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, plans to use Britain's EU presidency to give security services wider powers.



in the menu: the Millennium Commission goes on line

Nature-lover fined for pruning her tree

Michael Hornsby reports on the £2,500 cost of cutting back a sycamore

A LIFELONG nature-lover and horticulturist has been branded a criminal and fined £400, plus £100 costs, for pruning a tree in her garden without getting planning permission.

Mary Edwards, aged 63, who was found guilty just before Christmas by magistrates in Cromer, Norfolk, also faces a solicitor's bill of £1,500 on top of the £50 she paid to a tree surgeon to do the job.

Her crime was to cut about half a dozen branches off the top of a 40 ft sycamore, one of Britain's most ubiquitous trees, in a corner of the two-acre grounds of her Edwin Lutyens-designed house in the coastal village of Overstrand.

Mrs Edwards, who has lived in the house with her husband since 1969, says she was not aware that her section of the village was part of a conservation area or that she needed the approval of North Norfolk District Council for the work to be done. "The

sycamore is in a windy corner and I decided to lop some branches off the top to give it a better chance in a gale," she said, yesterday. "Some of the branches were also diseased. It never occurred to me that I needed permission to do this in my own garden."

"No one ever wrote to us, or told us, that we were in a conservation area. There was nothing in the house deeds about it. In the past the old gardener we then had used to prune trees occasionally and no complaint was ever made. This is bureaucracy gone mad."

Mrs Edwards had the work done in February. The council decided to prosecute after being tipped off by another resident of the village, although Mrs Edwards does not know who this was.

"If I was a hooligan and had cut down a tree, then I would deserve to be fined," she said. "I have been a horticulturist for the last 40 years. I would

have more hurt a tree than jump off a cliff."

Mrs Edwards would have earned the plaudits of many foresters and conservationists had she gone further and cut down the whole tree. The sycamore, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, a native of central Europe, imported to Britain about 400 years ago, is widely regarded as something of a nuisance.

In woods it spreads rapidly by seed at the expense of other trees. Its saplings can live for many years in shade, which few indigenous trees are able to do, and the dense litter formed by its leathery leaves suppresses woodland flowers and deters birds and other wildlife.

In any case, under the Town and Country Planning Act, she should not have undertaken any work without permission. That part of the village has been in a conservation area since 1978. The parish council would have been notified, and notices about the change of status



Mary Edwards and the sycamore. "It never occurred to me that I needed permission."

Guardian of stately homes is dead at 89

By PHILIP DELVES
BROUGHAM

JAMES Lees-Milne, whose conservation work for the National Trust saved many of Britain's great stately homes, and whose waspish diaries made the occupants of those houses squirm, died on Sunday. He was 89.

Mr Lees-Milne worked for the National Trust's Country Houses Committee, which was set up in 1936, and persuaded the inhabitants of houses such as Cliveden, Nostell Priory and West Wycombe Park that, with the help of the Trust, their houses could be saved.

Although his critics called him a snob, Mr Lees-Milne preferred to be called an acute observer of class distinction. His books on architecture included *Architectural Voices* and *Caves of Ice*.

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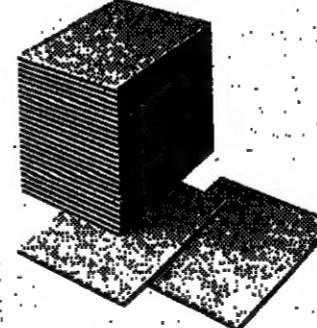
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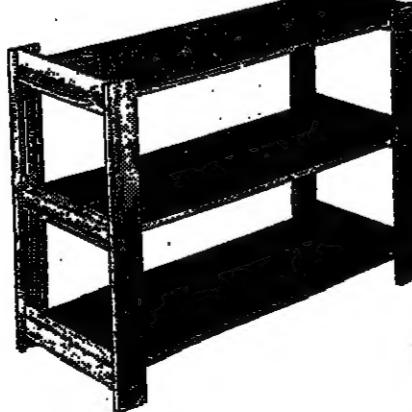
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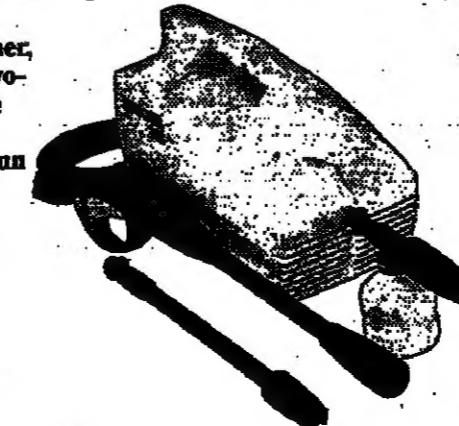


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Father kills himself after shooting his disturbed son

By LIN JENKINS

THE family of a man who committed suicide after shooting his psychologically disturbed teenage son yesterday said that lack of professional help had led to the tragedy.

They claimed that the incessant demands of caring for Philip Carter, 16, who suffered from an obsession with cleanliness, caused his father, Gerold, to snap.

Philip was yesterday said to be comfortable in St Richard's Hospital, Chichester, after undergoing 2½ hours of emergency surgery. His mother, Christine, 46, was distraught and remained with relatives. She told her sister-in-law: "I have nothing to live for."

Philip had planned to take Philip to the doctor yesterday because his obsessional compulsive disorder had deteriorated over Christmas. His condition meant he would wash his hands constantly, complain that his clothes were dirty even after three washes, and demand new shoes if he trod in dog mess. He insisted that the house be kept spotless.

His aunt Tina Carter, 50, a paediatric nurse, said she blamed the lack of psychological treatment and support for the family for the shootings. Philip's condition meant he had rituals and routines of ultra-cleanliness. "It drove his father to the limits. I think it would have pushed anyone

too far because you just don't know how to help the child. It is a very difficult problem and it could make him very aggressive. He needs psychological special care but when he finished his education in the summer he came home and his parents were dealing with the problem without any back-up."

Philip began showing signs of problems from the age of six, throwing tantrums and being disruptive. At the age of 11, after just a few weeks at Chichester High School, he was assessed as having special educational needs and sent to Meadows School in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, run by the charity Barnardo's.

During school holidays his parents received help from the social services in caring for their only son, but the support ended in October 1995 when Philip appeared to be fairly stable.

Mrs Carter said that her nephew had recently become worse. She added: "He would not know how far to go with his parents. I felt very sorry for him. Philip used to talk to his Dad a lot but things got worse. I think he could not go through it all again."

The shooting happened when the boy's mother was visiting friends. "I think something happened to him with the boy. He tore up this book and his father just flipped."

Mrs Carter yesterday visited her nephew in hospital, where he had been told of his father's suicide. "He was cool and calm. I don't think it has sunk in yet."

West Sussex County Council said it had not been contacted since October 1995 when social service support ended by mutual agreement.

Christmas drove mother crackers

By A CORRESPONDENT

A MOTHER pushed to breaking point by the stresses and strains of a family Christmas was held in police cells for a night after her patience with her three children and husband finally snapped.

Sarah Hughes, 32, dumped the family's presents in the bin and ripped down the decorations. She slammed the front door, shattering the glass, and when her husband, Michael, 33, said he was calling the police she cut the telephone wires and tried to slash the tyres on his car.

Eventually two police officers arrived at the family's home in Redcar, and arrested her for a breach of the peace. After a night in custody she appeared in court yesterday and told magistrates: "I could do without Christmas."

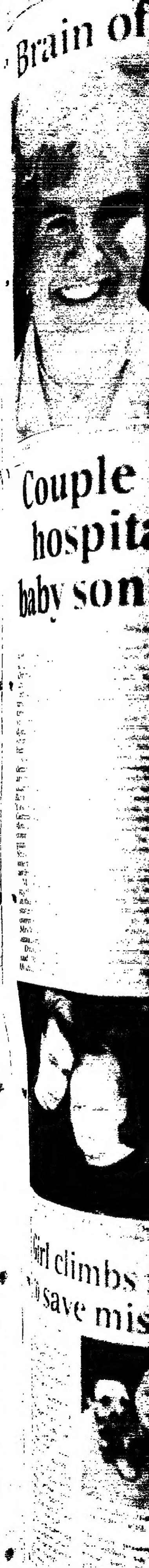
Mrs Hughes, who has been married for ten years, blamed her husband and the children,

aged 9, 6 and 3, for her loss of control. "I love my kids and I wouldn't hurt them," she said, "but they had thrown the toys everywhere for two days after Christmas and they didn't deserve them. I got annoyed. I threw some of them in the bin. My husband sometimes drives me to distraction. I can hurt him by shouting and ranting."

She added: "Christmas has been a big thing in it. I could do without Christmas."

Janet Brisley, for the prosecution, told Teesside Magistrates in Middlesbrough: "She is taking medication, and her husband said that leading up to Christmas she was becoming progressively worse."

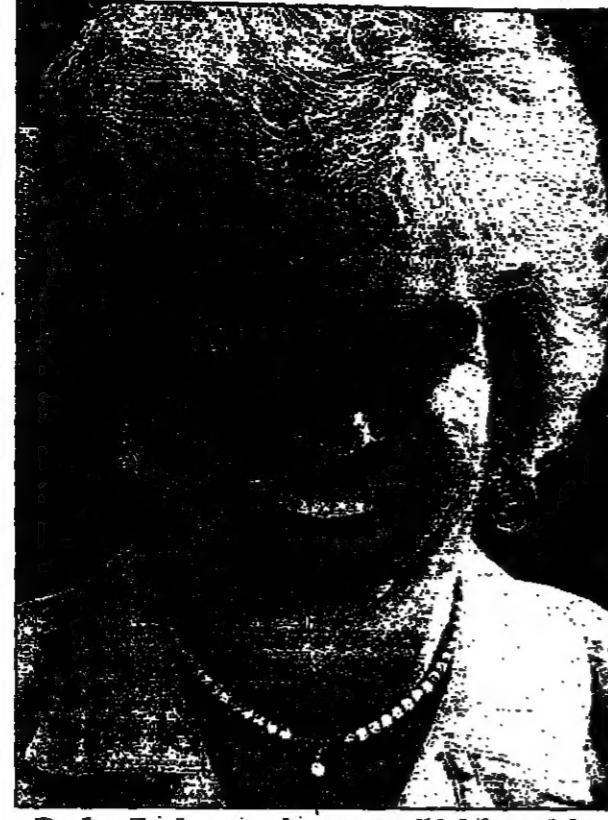
Mrs Hughes, who admitted breaching the peace, was bound over in the sum of £25 for three months. She responded: "Thank you very much."



JAPAN 50

Guard
of
home
dead;

Brain of Britain gives Mastermind a sore head



Daphne Fowler: says she cannot tell left from right

RADIO'S 'Brain of Britain' has routed television's Mastermind. Daphne Fowler, a mother of five who dropped out of university more than 40 years ago, beat the reigning *Mastermind* champion Anne Ashurst by 35 points to 15 in a head-to-head contest.

The victory was the pinnacle of a quiz career during which Mrs Fowler has scaled new heights in trivia, from representing Britain in a *Sale of the Century* international to winning a car and cash prizes totalling £20,000.

For the first time in the *Masterbrain* contest between the victors of the two BBC quiz shows, the competitors were both women, and by coincidence both live in Somerset, although they had never met. They were born within a year of each other, are starlings of their pub quiz teams, left school with seven O levels and are self-confessed scatterbrains.

Mrs Fowler has trouble telling her right from her left and claims she had to write R and L on her hands to pass her driving test. She says she never goes shopping without a detailed list because she is

terribly forgetful. Mrs Ashurst, 59, was forced by teachers to give up mathematics at 13 because she was hopeless.

After her victory, which was broadcast on Radio 4 yesterday, Mrs Fowler, 58, said: "I'm thrilled to win against Anne, as *Mastermind* has finished and she was the last winner. It's a shame, because although I've won a lot of quiz games I always wanted to have a go at *Mastermind*."

The competitors in yesterday's *Masterbrain* quiz, which was hosted by the veteran question master Robert Robinson, also included the runner-up in *Mastermind* and *Brain of Britain*. Mrs Fowler made a flying start, getting all her general knowledge questions right, and was soon picking up

extra points as her competitors answered wrongly.

The retired secretary from Weston-super-Mare, North West Somerset, said: "There is a technique to using the buzzer when other people make mistakes which I don't think the others had mastered."

"I chose Agatha Christie's *Miss Marple* books for my subject and I worked really hard on it — there are 12 books and 20 short stories and I read them all at least twice and made endless notes."

Mrs Fowler added: "The answers just pop into my brain. I sometimes wonder where they come from. I don't consider myself very bright but I do have an abnormal memory." She met her second husband, Peter, at a pub

quiz when he was question master.

Mrs Ashurst, from Williton, near Taunton, finished last out of the four with 15 points. The Mills and Boon novelist, who has written 50 books, chose Asterix the Gaul as her specialist subject on *Masterbrain*.

Mrs Ashurst admits to being "totally innumerate". She said: "I was lucky there were no maths questions on *Mastermind*."

The questions Mrs Fowler answered correctly to win the *Masterbrain* title included:

Which Italian city holds an art exhibition every other year known as the Biennale?

The Eden is one of Britain's sizeable northward-flowing rivers. In which county does it reach the sea?

Which duke is among Britain's five richest people?

In describing a car what does the term OHC mean?

The Greek or Turkish dish *Bacalao* is made from flaky pastry, nuts, sugar, spices, butter and what other ingredient?

Answers: 1. Venice. 2. Cumbria. 3. Westminster. 4. Overhead camshaft. 5. Honey.



Anne Ashurst: had to give up mathematics at 13

Couple blame hospital for baby son's death

By PAUL WILKINSON

A YOUNG mother gave birth to a son on a settee on Christmas Day two hours after a hospital had allegedly sent her home for the third time. The four-months-premature child named Callum survived for less than three hours, dying in the same hospital where his mother had gone for help.

Now the baby's family are demanding an inquiry and are consulting lawyers. They claim that staff at Doncaster Royal Infirmary in South Yorkshire failed to realise that Gemma White, 20, was in slow labour when she came in complaining about stomach pains on three different days. She was told she had a urinary infection and was given antibiotics.

Mrs White's parents, who say they helped deliver the boy in their front room, rejected a statement by the hospital's controlling NHS trust that Mrs White discharged herself against medical advice.

David Welch, her father, said: "It is all complete lies. My daughter did not ask to go

home. She wanted to stay in hospital because she was in pain. If they say she discharged herself, then I hope they have got plenty of forms as evidence. She did not fill any in."

In its statement the trust said it regretted the "unfortunate circumstances" surrounding Mrs White's case. "Her discharge was against the recommendation of the medical team but was permitted as she had an appointment booked for December 29. There was visual evidence of abnormal development of the baby, but a post-mortem has been refused." The baby was delivered by trained paramedics, it said.

It continued: "Gemma was admitted on December 23 for over an hour and treated for a urine infection. She was readmitted on December 25 but she asked to go home after around five hours of further treatment, and investigation when symptoms had ceased."

The statement made no mention of her claimed visit on Christmas Eve. It said that

an incubator was not necessary when the baby arrived.

Five years ago the maternity unit at Doncaster Royal Infirmary in South Yorkshire was cleared of negligence after the parents of 34 babies born over a 10-year period complained that inadequate treatment had left their children brain-damaged. Two of them died. One family later received a £1.25 million settlement after their son was left handicapped.

Mr Welch continued: "The baby's head and shoulders were out by the time the paramedics walked in."

The family says that the hospital knew Mrs White was experiencing difficulties with her pregnancy after a scan two weeks earlier. The day before Christmas Eve she returned with abdominal pains. Doctors diagnosed an infection and gave her antibiotics.

When the problem persisted she returned the next day but says she was sent away again. By the early hours of Christmas morning she was so ill that she returned once more and this time was admitted.

About six hours later she and her husband Kieran, 27, went to her parents' home in Bentley, Doncaster. Soon after arriving, the birth started, with her mother, Sue, 42, and father helping until an ambulance crew arrived.

Callum, weighing just 1lb 6oz, was taken to the infirmary, but died shortly afterwards in his father's arms. His mother was still being treated by a midwife at her parents' house and discovered her son had died when she arrived at the hospital. She said: "I walked in to find Kieran holding Callum. I'm just so angry."

Kevin Hughes, the Labour MP for Doncaster North, who lives close to the Welches said he was writing to Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary.



Gemma White and her husband, Kieran. Their baby lived for only three hours on Christmas Day

Girl climbs into drain to save missing dog

By PAUL WILKINSON

A GIRL of 11 has rescued her missing dog by climbing into a water-filled storm drain. Jennifer Dobson's four-year-old border terrier, Sandy, disappeared from her home in Newcastle upon Tyne three weeks ago. She and her brother, Christopher, 15, had scoured the streets looking for it. Christopher walked for so long he lost a stone in weight. But with temperatures below zero the chances of finding it safe seemed slim until, last weekend, a neighbour heard a faint whimpering coming from a storm drain. When he lifted the manhole cover he saw Sandy 12ft below and went to tell its owner, Miss Dobson, who had no hesitation in climbing into the culvert to rescue her pet.

Yesterday she said: "Having Sandy back is the best



Christmas present I could have wished for. Nothing would have stopped me getting into the drain to save him. Sandy recognised me straight away. He was really weak but he still managed to jump up and lick my face because he was so pleased to see me."

"It could have been dangerous climbing down the

ladder into the drain but I just knew I had to get Sandy. It was such a wonderful feeling to find him alive after so long that I felt my heart would burst."

Her mother, Lynn, said: "Sandy has been checked by the vet who is amazed he survived so long. We don't know how Sandy got down the drain but it appears he has survived on drinking rain water. Most dogs would have died in the freezing conditions but Sandy must have an incredible will to live. He's now fighting his way back to health and he has enjoyed a good night's sleep, snuggled up in bed with Jennifer."

"He is still weak and we have had to carry him upstairs because he is too tired to walk. But he is starting to play with his ball and the love we are giving him is helping with his full recovery."

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Former pupils condemn 'bitchy' all-girl schools

A DECLINE in demand for single-sex schools was forecast yesterday after a survey of past pupils showed few would choose them for their own children.

Just a third of students educated at boys-only or girls-only schools said they wanted the same education for their child. In contrast, almost all those questioned who went to mixed schools wanted the same experience for their offspring.

The finding by the Centre for Education and Employment Research, based at Brunel University, follow its analysis of examination results which claimed that single-sex schools did little to enhance pupils' results, despite their dominance of league tables.

Professor Alan Smithers, director of the centre, said the survey showed single-sex schools were

■ The authors of a survey of 19-year-olds disenchanted with their education predict a decline in single-sex schools, David Charter reports

outdated, rather than in terminal decline. "Separation did not occur for educational reasons, it occurred for social reasons which have long since passed," said Professor Smithers.

"In state education, the belief was that boys were being educated for work and girls for the home," he said. "In the independent sector, boys were sent away to be educated while girls were taught at home by governesses. When girls' education was established it imitated the pattern for boys."

The introduction of comprehen-

sive schools in the 1960s saw most schools go co-educational, leaving behind highly selective single sex grammar schools. This explained their dominance of examination tables, he said.

Professor Smithers added: "Increasingly it is being regarded as more natural and normal for the sexes to be educated together in secondary education."

His team interviewed 100 students in their first year at university about their school experiences. Many girls from single-sex schools complained about the competitive

ness and "spitefulness" of an all-girl atmosphere, although some valued being pushed academically.

Typical comments included: "All these girls together were so competitive. The smallest little spelling test and there was mass hysteria over what marks you got."

One girl said: "It was a bit bitchy because it was all girls, but without boys there was less of a distraction."

Another commented: "Not seeing boys in a working environment, you only ever saw them as a possible romantic thing. You were never looking for them as a friend."

Some girls from mixed schools said boys tended to dominate lessons, while another said: "The boys didn't dominate the lessons, rather the girls ... the boys didn't get a look in." Boys who went to

PARENTS OF TRUANTS GIVEN PAGERS

Parents of regular truants are being issued with pagers so they can be alerted immediately if their children miss a lesson. The scheme in County Durham will be studied by government advisers and may be extended nationally if it improves attendance. It is one of 119 local authority programmes given backing from a £22 million government fund announced

yesterday. Stephen Byers, the Schools Standards Minister, said the projects would help ministers to find new approaches in tackling disaffection among teenagers. In Walsall, near Birmingham, pupils are to be given school passes to monitor attendance. In Devon, council officials plan to appoint "return to school" tutors to work with truants.

with the opposite sex. Of the girls educated in single-sex schools, 38 per cent wanted the same for their children. 20 per cent co-educational schools, 18 per cent wanted mixed sixth form education and 24

per cent had no preference. Among boys, nearly 30 per cent wanted single-sex schooling for their child, 30 per cent wanted mixed and 11 per cent co-educational after 16, while nearly 30 per cent were undecided.

Margaret Rudland, past president of the Girls' Schools Association, said: "There does not seem to be a decline at the moment in parental interest in single-sex schools. You could also argue that the decline in the maintained sector was not driven by market forces but was a policy decision."

She added: "Maybe when these young people become parents other factors will come into play. The views of 19-year-olds are not the same as 39-year-olds when they have their own children's future to think about."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Date is set for au pair's appeal

Louise Woodward, the 19-year-old au pair from Elton, Cheshire, has been given a date for appeals against her conviction for the manslaughter of eight-month-old Matthew Eappen. She could know in a little over two months if she faces a minimum 15-year sentence or whether she will be free to return home.

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court is to hear appeals on March 6 from Miss Woodward and the prosecution. Opening arguments will be lodged by January 20. Briefs arguing against the appeals will be filed by February 17 with replies lodged ten days later.

Victim ignored

Burglars are thought to have ignored a man lying in a diabetic coma while they ransacked his flat. James Mather, 52, of Sunderland, was discovered after neighbours contacted police about the break-in. He was taken to hospital where he died the next day.

Airliner alert

An airline carrying 173 passengers made an emergency landing at Birmingham International Airport after the pilot discovered problems with a landing flap. The 757 Britannia Airways plane, en route from Faro, Portugal, to Manchester, landed safely.

Cell death

Police have launched an inquiry into the death of a man who collapsed in custody. Robert Hughes, 24, of Carlisle, was found in his cell two hours after he arrived at Lancaster police station on Boxing Day to help with inquiries into a breach of the peace.

Monet all-day

The Royal Academy of Arts in London plans to open 24 hours a day for a Monet exhibition in 1999. The move follows the success of late-night opening for its *Sensation* exhibition, which attracted 300,000 visitors up to its closure on Sunday.

Vanished

Police are hunting thieves who stole a garden shed from a house in Dorset. The complete 6ft x 4ft structure was taken, along with its contents including fishing tackle and a bicycle from the back garden of Russell Langley's house in the hamlet of Woodway.

Age no barrier

A woman of 96 is one of Britain's oldest first-time authors. Margie Jenkins, of Esher, Surrey, has had *Fun at Bedtime for Little People*, stories and poems for children, written as a reaction against violent entertainment, published by the Book Guild.

Festive double

Cherry Miller, 36, of Downend, Bristol, has given birth to two sons on Christmas Day — six years apart. Mrs Miller's latest son, as yet unnamed, is a brother for Jacob. She and her husband, Paul, 38, also have a daughter, Corinne, 3.

CORRECTION

A report ("High-flying union official grounded after hitting rival", April 9) concerning a British Airways union official, Michael Coleman, incorrectly stated that he earned more than £120,000 a year. His earnings are approximately £42,000. The article also wrongly said that Mr Coleman spat at and punched a rival union official. We apologise for these errors.

Murals in the cathedral cast new light on early worship

An astonishing array of painting and sculpture has been uncovered by scholars, reports Dalya Alberge



The Chapter House at Worcester Cathedral

SPECTACULAR medieval wall paintings and sculptures, some of which have lain hidden for centuries, have been discovered at Worcester Cathedral.

Paintings dating from 1090 — among the oldest images in the country — to 1500 have emerged. Although the majority are relatively small or faint fragments, they cast dramatic light on the cathedral and worship in the Middle Ages in that they suggest much of the interior was painted in vivid colours.

The discoveries were made by a team from the Courtauld Institute headed by David Park, a leading scholar of wall painting. He was struck by the extraordinary amount of painting that survives in what seems to be a relatively pain-free building. The masonry appears to be untouched, bare stone, but conservators discovered paintings everywhere — from down in the depths of the crypt to around the highest capitals.

Descriptions of rosettes, foliage, details of faces and drapery have been found throughout. "In fact, so much has survived you can get a good idea of how it looked through the Middle Ages," Mr Park said.

In the chapter house they

found evidence showing that each of a series of niches once featured busts of angels holding books; he explained that Worcester was once part of a monastery and monks would have sat in those niches.

Perhaps the most exciting image is a 1200s head of an angel whose quality, he said, was unsurpassed by any English painting of the 13th century. Scholars and the clergy are also particularly impressed by

the project resulted in the rediscovery of a major collection of polychromed and other medieval sculptures. These and other fragments of medieval stonework, which may even include a section of St Wulstan's shrine, are of extraordinary significance," Mr Park's report to the Dean and Chapter says. Worcester cathedral was originated by St Wulstan in 1084.

Many of the finds date from the early 13th century; some were almost missed as they had been placed so high up in the triforium in the nave and the choir: close study showed that sculptures of bishops and angels — a precursor of Lincoln Cathedral's famous angel choir — had once been painted. Among beautifully carved images of kings, queens and angels, they found a large black frog on the pagan-style shield of a king. "A frog in the Middle Ages signified evil,"

Mr Park said. "That makes him evil. That means the cycle has to be reinterpreted. They are not all goodies up there. He may be an anti-Christ or Satan. His legs are also crossed, another sign of evil. So the whole scheme is more interesting."

Mr Park expressed amazement at a "great find" of 14th-century sculptures piled up in a cluttered storeroom above the giftshop. It could be reached only by a ladder from

the cloisters. Among them are 14th-century figures of a couple leaning over a parapet watching passers-by.

Scholars are particularly excited by fragments on the 1216 tomb of St John, whose will of 1209 expressed his wish to be buried between the shrines of St Oswald and St Wulstan — which were both destroyed during the Dissolution of the monasteries. Mr Park said that there had been a vigorous debate in the 19th century over

whether the marble effigy was painted red originally, ruling against that theory, the Victorians had gilded the entire piece. The gilding was removed in the 1930s, but fragments discovered by the Courtauld team prove that the effigy was bright red.

Although many of the finds emerged during a two-year survey that has just been completed, much of the material had been discovered in the mid-1980s by the cathedral

archaeologists but not fully studied until now. Their work is the most thorough survey of its kind undertaken by an English cathedral.

The Dean of Worcester, the Very Rev Peter Marshall, said: "We are only just beginning to get our minds around all the information, and it inspires and warms our hearts as we come to recognising the rich inspiration of those people who, in this way, expressed the vision of their faith."

A fragment of early 13th-century decoration from the cathedral. The amount of painting has surprised experts

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Globetrotting family reaches record books

FOR the past seven years a tiny horse-drawn caravan has been home to a Scottish family while they made a record-breaking round-the-world journey.

Three children and their parents have crossed three continents to become the first people to make a continuous circumnavigation of the world in a horse-drawn vehicle.

The Grant family and a succession of horses endured illness, political upheaval and war on their 12,360-mile overland trip. But now, back in Scotland, they face a struggle against poverty. A court case in Mongolia and expulsion from China both hit their finances and they only managed to complete the trip thanks to some kindly benefactors.

David and Kate Grant and their children, Torcull, 17, Eilidh, 16, and Fionn, 13, are being put up at a Scottish hotel by a sponsor until the middle of January but then they may have to return to their caravan because they say they are unable to claim benefits.

Their adventure began in August 1990 when the family sold their house in Orkney for £40,000 and decided to satisfy their wanderlust. At Letham Grange Hotel near Arbroath yesterday Mrs Grant said that they had thought up the trip after becoming bored with a humdrum lifestyle. "We both like travel and thought where can we go with a young family."

Inspiration came when they saw an advertisement for horse-drawn holidays. Mr Grant, who gave up his job as a wildlife management ecologist, said they had hoped the journey would "give the children a slightly different education from that supplied by the national curriculum".

Their caravan was built by a local funeral director to a design sketched on the back of an envelope by Mr Grant and at low points Mrs Grant says she felt it was "a bit like a coffin". She missed 18 months

Couple bored by humdrum lifestyle took children on the road for world trip

of the trip when she returned home twice because of illness and family problems.

The family said the saddest moment of the journey came when Traceur, the horse that pulled their caravan for over 10,000 miles, died. Their first horse had proved too light. Traceur pulled the caravan from France across Europe and Asia and in America to the Missouri where he died of a brain tumour.

In Mongolia three drunken men had tried to steal the horse. To frighten them, Mr Grant fired a few catapult shots over their heads. Later one of the men claimed he had been hit in the eye leading to a protracted court case. When charges were finally dropped Mr Grant was still forced to pay £750 for the complainant's medical expenses.

Earlier in the trip, the family had to flee from Slovenia when war broke out in the former Yugoslavia in 1991. A tractor was commanded to pull them to safety as snipers' bullets flew.

Their money troubles continued in China where £6,000 of their budget was eaten up when they were ordered to leave the country. Mr Grant said the authorities were unable to explain why they were to go. "All roads were closed to foreigners. It was two weeks before the UN women's conference. I just thought security had flipped."

Their money problems were later partly alleviated when Mr Peter Liu, who owns

THE

MAP

expert's theory that the remains of the lost city of Atlantis are in Bolivia is to be put to the test by an international expedition led by the British explorer, Colonel John Blashford-Snell.

Jim Allen of Torquay, an amateur archaeologist who trained as a photographic interpreter with the RAF, has spent more than 14 years trying to pinpoint the fabled city's location. He is convinced that it was built on and around Lake Poopo in the shadow of the Andes.

Mr Allen's research, based on a detailed study of satellite and aerial images where he has tried to match the Greek philosopher Plato's ancient description of the city with

the natural features on the globe, won favour with Colonel Blashford-Snell after being aired in *The Times* in February.

In March the explorer and 20 colleagues from Britain, America and Bolivian archaeological centres are to sail from Lake Titicaca down the Desaguadero River to Lake Poopo.

Here they plan to investigate an ancient canal-like feature which Mr Allen claims is man-made and gave the Atlanteans access to the sea from where they crossed to North Africa and the Mediterranean to trade.

The journey will be made in traditional dragon-headed reed boats which are under construction at Lake Titicaca. The expedition, which will also study settlements of the Tiwanaku Indians en route, expects to arrive at Lake Poopo in April.

Mr Allen said many classical scholars were convinced that Atlantis was a myth or, if it did exist, was in the Mediterranean near Gibraltar.

But he said there was compelling evidence from local place-names, a more sympathetic study of the Plato text, and satellite imagery that it was on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean in Antisuyu, the ancient name of modern-day Bolivia.

Col Blashford-Snell: expedition leader



The Grant family with the horse-drawn caravan that took them round the world; now it may become home again

Handler will leave best friend behind

By DANIEL McGROarty

A POLICE dog handler who is helping to search for the remains of a Royal Marine believed to have been murdered on the Falkland Islands will have to leave his dog behind after the venture.

Sergeant Mick Swindells and his border collie Lee, who are based in Blackpool, will lead the hunt next month for Alan Addis, who disappeared 17 years ago. Quarantine regulations will force Sergeant Swindells to leave the dog, which can detect graves and provide crucial evidence.

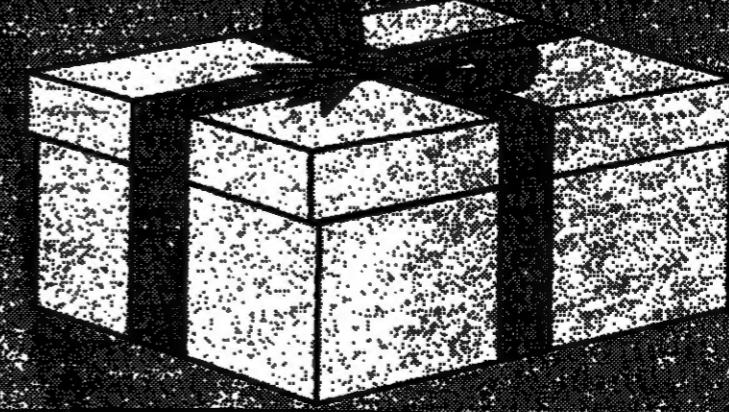
"It will be a tremendous wrench to part with Lee after five years of working with him but he could be the key to this mystery," Sergeant Swindells said. "He would be in quarantine for six months so it would be kinder to let him stay and work with the Falklands police."

Local detectives believe the 19-year-old commando was killed on the orders of a prominent islander who accused him of having an affair with his wife.

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police, they are mirrors, not

Birds take flight as orchards vanish

Intensive farming, fuelled by EU grants, is driving out some of the countryside's most familiar species, reports Nick Nuttall

THE destruction of old and traditional orchards is contributing to a decline in birdlife, scientists have found.

Surveys comparing modern, intensively managed orchards with old ones have found that numbers of birds and the variety of species are far greater where there are traditionally managed trees.

Dr Joe Crocker, one of the study scientists, said: "Old orchards foster a more abundant and diverse wildlife. The number of birds doubled in orchards where trees were more than 25 years old, he said. The findings indicate that the trend towards grubbing up old orchards in favour of new ones or other crops, fuelled by European agricultural grants, is contributing to the decline of some bird populations.

Dr Crocker, whose main work is on the effects of pesticides on the countryside, said urgent research was needed to see if the difference between old and new orchards was because of habitat or levels of pesticides.

"People see them [orchards] as pretty places and generally benign. But modern orchards are a high-tech business," said Dr Crocker, who is based at the Government's Central Science Laboratory in York.

Trees are planted in rows, are heavily pruned and are likely to receive frequent sprays during the season of fungicides, insecticides and herbicides. "Your average Cox's Orange Pippin will get 17 sprays before the apple

leaves the orchard," he said. In contrast, an old traditional orchard may receive just one or two sprays and few if any fungicides. News of the research comes as horticulturalists are preparing to offer growers nearly 150 lost varieties of apples, known from the medieval and early Christian period, which have been rediscovered in parks and gardens in Ireland.

The varieties, with names like Bloody Butcher, Red Brandy and Apple Jack — mentioned by Falstaff in Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part II*, are being grown from seed at University College Dublin.

It is believed that the genes in the old varieties could boost modern ones and help cut back on the need for pesticides.

Many of the older varieties are naturally resistant to modern-day pests such as scale, mildew and canker.

The varieties in old orchards may be less productive but more robust at dealing with pest attacks, and farmers often manage them alongside livestock which grazes underneath the trees.

Their dung increased the availability of insect food for birds as did the reduced use of herbicides, which increased the range and numbers of flowers. The age of the trees meant there were likely to be more holes for nesting birds and the older, more gnarled barks probably housed more insect and sap food.

Dr Crocker, a member of the British Ecological Society, and his team surveyed 109



"There should be a value on landscape and wildlife, rather than just on maximum production," says James Marsden, who owns an old orchard.

orchards in Hereford and Worcester. They carried out ten-minute surveys of hedges and trees, counting the number and species of birds and flowers. Not only were there twice as many birds in the older orchards but there were more species.

Both old and new orchards held common birds such as blue tits and chaffinches. But the older ones also held less

common birds, such as woodpeckers and little owls.

James Marsden of English Nature, who owns an old orchard in Much Marcle, Hereford and Worcester, said the findings confirmed his own surveys of his two-acre plot and of his neighbour's more substantial orchard.

"The modern bush orchard is a desert in comparison," he said. He and his neighbour

had scores of species including green, lesser spotted and greater spotted woodpeckers, tree creepers, roosting buzzards and goshawks.

"Our yields are nowhere near as heavy as in a modern bush orchard. But you have to look at this in the round. There should be a value on landscape and wildlife rather than just on maximum production," he said.

AN "eco" label for fruit is being promoted by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) to generate support for old varieties of fruit and traditionally managed orchards (writes Nick Nuttall).

Jim Dixon, senior policy officer specialising in agriculture at the RSPB, said that in Germany apples produced in old orchards now carried such labels. "They say, 'by buying this apple consumers are saving these birds, animals and plants,'" he said.

But Mr Dixon said reforms were needed in the way farmers were subsidised and funded for environmental-friendly agricultural schemes, under national programmes and those initiated under the European Common Agricultural Policy.

He said the Forest Stewardship scheme, promoted by



the Ministry of Agriculture to encourage farmers to manage forests, including orchards, for wildlife, was excellent but lacked finance. Its budget of £21 million could be spent "many times over". Meanwhile, the Government spent £3 billion on the common agricultural policy which subsidised farmers to maximise production of crops through intensive, environmentally damaging, agriculture.

Biologist stumbles on colony of alien crabs

BIOLOGISTS at the University of Wales have discovered a huge colony of South American dwarf crabs at Cardiff Docks.

Dr Chris Mettan spotted the crabs by chance while looking at worms in the area with a colleague.

It is thought the *Grapsopanopeus harrisi* may have arrived in Wales via the Netherlands, where boats from across the Atlantic have started a thriving population of the crabs, which have white claws and are the size of a fingernail.

The two biologists also discovered another "alien invader", a mussel which they think comes from West Africa. "We think these alien species come in as larvae in the ballast water of ships," said Dr Mettan.

"We are not sure how long the crabs have been here but, from scraping samples we have taken, the colony now numbers possibly hundreds of thousands.

"I was showing my colleague, Dr Jorg Hardige, some worms in the area when we discovered them.

"It is a great bonus to find them because Dr Hardige is working on research into pheromones, and how animals use them to send messages, and this species has been used to that end in the past."

The crab species is currently confined to the Roath basin and sheltered areas in the docks but Dr Mettan, 54, believes the building of the Cardiff Bay Barrage could encourage them to spread. "There will be more river water behind the barrage and it will be less salty, which they like," he said.

"We also don't know for sure what effect on the local crab population it would have if the colony got out of the docks and spread, so we are keeping an eye on it. Further research needs to be done on that, but it is not thought that they would cause a great deal of harm."



Much Marcle's birds: from left, the little owl, green woodpecker, lesser spotted woodpecker, greater spotted woodpecker, tree creeper and goshawk.

Battleship gunner turned traitor for love and money

Michael Evans on the sailor who betrayed the fleet to Kaiser's Germany

A SAILOR who was seduced into spying by the wife of a German agent earned a fortune for the secrets he betrayed, according to newly released MI5 files covering the pre-First World War period.

George Parrott, the only Englishman to be put on trial for spying for the Germans before war began, was chief gunner of the battleship HMS *Agamemnon*. He became one of the highest-paid agents recruited by the German secret intelligence service during the lead-up to war.

The MI5 files, released by the Public Record Office, belie the widespread belief that the Germans were poor payers. Warrant Officer Parrott was paid £500 in 1910 for a naval manoeuvres report for 1909 — the equivalent of more than £23,000 today.

Soon after he was recruited in 1910, Parrott handed over four volumes of a Navy report on gunnery in 1908 and 1909, for which he was paid £40 — about £1,500 today.

The MI5 files underline the professionalism of the Germans, and the way in which

the British counter-espionage agency, founded in 1909, tackled the threat with limited resources. The decision to allow MI5 to intercept mail led to the uncovering of many spies.

Parrott was recruited by Patricia Riley, who lived in Sheerness and married Karl Hentschel, an ex-merchant seaman employed by the German secret service. Hentschel moved to Chatham after marrying and set up a language school, posing as a Dutchman. Patricia Hentschel was

so successful that by the summer of 1910 Parrott was providing details of exercises off Portland, battle practice at sea and other naval manoeuvres involving *Agamemnon*.

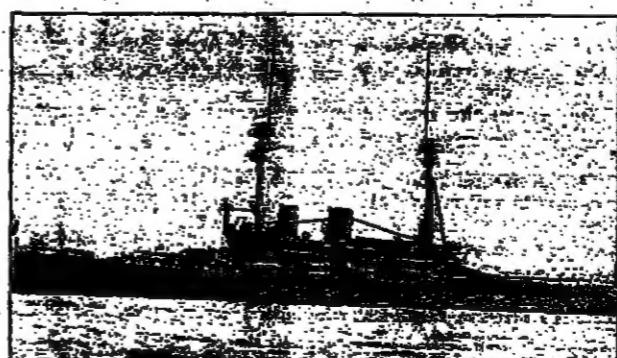
MI5 discovered that at one point Parrott smuggled Karl Hentschel on board *Agamemnon* and showed him the guns. Later, Patricia Hentschel persuaded him to remove Navy gunnery instruction manuals and the handbook of a six-inch gun.

But when the Germans asked him to provide a complete list of classified manuals and documents on navy ships, Parrott at first refused "but after being threatened with exposure, he agreed on condition nothing was put in writing", the MI5 files reveal.

In March 1911 Parrott and Hentschel quarrelled over money and the German's jealousy over his spy's relationship with his wife. Parrott also came under suspicion after his mail was intercepted in 1910, and, although there was insufficient evidence to charge him, he was sacked from the Navy in 1912.

Parrott was sentenced to four years in prison after being arrested subsequently with an incriminating letter from the Germans. His wife received a pension from the German secret service.

German agents recruited in occupied territory to spy on Britain were taught in Antwerp by a "fair woman" known as Baroness Jeanne, Fraulein Doktor and Madame Slaghmuider. An MI5 file of 1917 said she trained agents to learn questions by heart because of fear of police raids.



Parrott was the chief gunner on HMS Agamemnon

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Pilot on terror flight had only seconds to act

By MICHAEL EVANS

THE pilot of United Airlines Flight 826, bound for Honolulu with 374 passengers and 19 crew, had just seconds to warn everyone to put on their seatbelts before the Boeing 747 flew into a vortex of unexpectedly severe clear air turbulence that forced the jumbo jet to fall 1,000ft.

Many passengers, mostly Japanese holidaymakers, were still walking around or sitting with their belts unfastened when the plane returned to Narita airport, near Tokyo. United Airlines said ten were injured seriously enough to be kept in hospital.

Passengers, with blood-stained faces and broken bones, were taken to hospital when the plane returned to Narita airport, near Tokyo. United Airlines said ten were injured seriously enough to be kept in hospital.

Seconds before the airline entered the danger zone, it had been flying smoothly; there was no sign of storm clouds. As the plane began to shake and lose altitude, the pilot said: "We have just hit air turbulence and the aircraft descended 300 metres. There is no danger of a crash."

Clear air turbulence is unpredictable and cannot be forecast. Standard radar on the Boeing 747 cannot detect it.

The mêlée was videoed by a passenger: it showed the aircraft shaking, and screaming

involuntarily. The pilot, it showed, was videoed by a passenger: it showed the aircraft shaking, and screaming

US urges passengers to keep seatbelts fastened

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

THE death and injuries caused when the United Airlines 747 hit turbulence over the Pacific drew renewed attention yesterday to an American government campaign for passengers to keep their seatbelts fastened while seated.

With the slogan "Turbulence happens", the campaign was launched a year ago in the aftermath of two serious incidents. In-flight turbulence is the leading cause of injuries to airline passengers and flight attendants in non-fatal accidents in America, according to the Federal Aviation Administration in Washington. On average, 50 passengers are injured by turbulence in America each year through not wearing seatbelts when the "fasten seatbelt" sign is illuminated.

Between 1981 and 1996, 252

episodes of turbulence affected the larger airlines. As a result, two passengers died, 63 received serious and 863 minor injuries. Those who died were both not wearing seatbelts although the warning sign was lit. Of the 63 seriously injured, 61 were not wearing seatbelts, 59 when the sign was on.

The statistics have persuaded the FAA to declare that most turbulence injuries can be prevented simply by buckling up. The FAA says turbulence can be created – even when the sky appears clear – through a variety of conditions, including atmospheric pressure, jet streams, waves of air flowing around mountains, cold or warm fronts and thunderstorms. Two-thirds of turbulence accidents occur at or above

30,000ft. The United Airlines flight on Sunday between Tokyo and Honolulu was at 33,000ft.

The FAA campaign is supported by aviation safety organisations and the Association of Flight Attendants, whose members see, and suffer from, the effects of turbulence at first hand. Of those injured on Sunday, nine were cabin crew.

In addition to strongly recommending seatbelts for adults, the FAA also advises that young children should be protected by approved infant restraint seats. Last June the FAA banned the use of booster seats and harness restraints for young children on US airlines. Tests showed that these devices, which do provide protection in cars, could cause internal and head injuries in an aviation emergency.

investigate the incident, which took place in international airspace over the northern Pacific about 1,100 miles east of Tokyo. Japanese authorities also began interviewing witnesses to determine what procedures were followed and how the incident was handled

by the crew. Some passengers denied the seatbelt sign had been illuminated and this assertion will be at the heart of the investigation into the incident now under way. Tony Molinari, a United Airlines spokesman, said: "The seatbelt sign was on when the plane was hit by severe turbulence. But there had to be folks who weren't belted."

In the most extreme example of such clear air turbulence, in 1966, a BOAC Boeing 707 crashed with the loss of all 124 people on board when the airplane was trapped in the lee of Mount Fuji. That was a freak accident. Sunday's incident was also highly unusual because of the severity of the turbulence and the fact that the passengers appeared either to be totally unaware of the imminent danger or had ignored the seatbelt sign. A

spokesman for the British Civil Aviation Authority said aircraft were tested to withstand all weathers, but he stressed that, unless the airline passengers wore seatbelts when they were told to do so, their safety could not be guaranteed.

New radar system can alert pilots to wayward winds

A RADAR system capable of detecting clear air turbulence is being developed by an American company, Allied Signal Aerospace (Michael Evans writes).

David Learmount, operations and safety editor of *Flight International* magazine, said the new system was being developed principally to detect wind shear at low altitude.

These are dangerously wayward winds that can hit an aircraft as it lands.

One of the secondary benefits of the new system, Mr Learmount said, was that it would also be able to detect clear air turbulence at high altitude.

The new system, operates on a completely different wavelength, he said.

However, he did not believe it would become compulsory for all commercial airlines to carry the new radar.

"It will be expensive and will mean an increase in ticket costs, and if you get one death from clear air turbulence in ten years out of the 15 billion passengers that will fly over the same period it may not be worth it," he said.

The new system will be based on what is called a Doppler Shift radar that will be able to detect sudden changes in wind velocity.

If an aircraft is flying towards an invisible vortex of wind with a violent down-draft, the new radar will provide an early warning to the pilot.

Military aircraft are already fitted with a Doppler system, but it is not yet available to commercial aircraft.

British executives defy US over Cuba

By JON ASHWORTH
AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

ABOUT 100 British business men are to fly to Cuba on Air France's first Concorde trip to the country on New Year's Eve to explore investment opportunities. Cuba's news agency reported yesterday.

The visit will be a provocation to the US Administration, which threatens to blacklist any foreigners doing business with President Castro's state. The Helms-Burton Act seeks to blacklist companies which make use of former American-owned assets in Cuba, making it virtually impossible to invest legally in sectors such as sugar and telecommunications, which were once almost entirely US-owned.

The news agency, Press Latina, yesterday quoted Valentin Rodriguez, director of public relations for the Cuban tourism company Havanatur, as saying the trip was part of his company's effort to promote travel to Cuba from European nations, including Britain, France and Germany. Spaniards and Italians now make up the bulk of the Europeans who visit Cuba.

The Department of Trade and Industry said it had no knowledge of the visit. No DTI officials are involved, and no ministers will be accompanying the business men. The DTI organises regular overseas visits in the hope of creating investment opportunities for British companies.

There is nothing to stop European Union members from investing in Cuba, although pressure from America has limited the flow of potential investors.

Cuba is actively seeking foreign direct investment, particularly in banking, construction and industry. Premier, the British oil exploration company, is prospecting for oil and natural gas in Cuba. BAT Industries set up a cigarette joint venture in 1995 after a 35-year absence, while Unilever has formed a joint venture making toiletries.

Caspian states bypass Russia with lucrative export route

Turkmenistan's new gas pipeline could help the area to become the new Gulf, writes Richard Beeston

THE energy-rich Caspian Basin came a step closer to its dream of becoming the new Gulf yesterday, when Iran and the former Soviet Republic of Turkmenistan opened a modest, but symbolically important, pipeline.

In a move likely to alter the regional balance of power and the future prosperity of the neglected Caspian nations, President Niyazov of Turkmenistan and President Khatami, his Iranian counterpart, mounted a podium and turned a large wheel to open the new pipeline.

The 125-mile link will carry gas from the Turkmen Kordzhe field to the Iranian town of Kord Kuy, just across the border. Although modest in scale, the pipeline could have huge implications well beyond the area. It is the first for the export of energy products that bypasses Russian territory. Moscow has had a stranglehold over the energy-rich nations of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan because it controls the export pipelines.

Turkmenistan, which has the world's third-largest proven reserves of natural gas, was a neglected and impoverished republic under Soviet rule. After the collapse of communism, Moscow made it almost impossible for the country to receive any profit from its gas wealth and, since last spring, Turkmenistan has refused to

export via Russian pipelines. Now, with the export door opened, there are hopes that more ambitious projects will get under way. Over the weekend, the leaders of Turkey, Turkmenistan and Iran authorised Royal Dutch/Shell to go ahead with a feasibility study for a 940-mile pipeline to pump gas from the Central Asia fields across northern Iran and on to Turkey, from where it could reach Western markets.

Other proposals include plans for a pipeline to run

south through western Afghanistan to Pakistan, and another on the Caspian Sea bed for the export of gas through Azerbaijan and Georgia to the Black Sea.

America must be watching events with mixed emotions. Until now Washington has successfully blocked all attempts by Tehran to become involved in Central Asia. Now, however, the new moderate Iranian President is signalling, on his first foreign trip since being elected, that Tehran is eager and able to have a

slice of the largest new energy market in the world. He is not alone, however, and every major player in the international energy market is fighting for a place in the region, where some predict the birth of new Kuwait and Saudi Arabias in the coming decade.

Last month, Azerbaijan began pumping from a new offshore oilfield and exporting via Chechnya and Russia to the Black Sea coast. Next year it hopes to open a new pipeline through Georgia.

Nevertheless, the Central Asian nations are fearful that war, religious fanaticism and instability could spread from Afghanistan and Tajikistan. In the volatile Caucasus the threat of violence can never be ignored, particularly since all four nations in the region have unsettled conflicts on their territory.

□ Power deal: Russia and China yesterday signed a multi-billion-pound nuclear power station deal, the first of several planned huge joint projects. In the latest show of warming relations between the two former communist rivals, Li Peng, the Chinese Prime Minister, greeted Boris Nemtsov, the Russian Deputy Prime Minister, for the signing ceremony. The deal, worth nearly £2 billion, involves the construction of two nuclear reactors in the port city of Liyangang, in the eastern Jiangsu province.

Islamabad: Launching his journey from prison cell to parliament in an armoured personnel carrier, Benazir Bhutto's husband took the oath of office as a senator yesterday – nine months after he was elected – having won a court order.

Asif Ali Zardari, who has

been in jail in Karachi since his wife's Government was dismissed last year, was flown to Islamabad, the Pakistani capital, and whisked away

from the airport in a convoy of police vehicles.

Mr Zardari is being tried for the murder of Miss Bhutto's estranged brother, Murtaza, who died in a hail of police bullets outside his home in Karachi, just two months before her dismissal. Mr Zardari has denied he ordered Murtaza's killing. (AP)

Mexico's ruling party denies link to massacre

FROM DAVID ADAMS IN MIAMI

MEXICO'S ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) has denied any link with a Mayor charged over the massacre of 45 Indian villagers at Acteal, in the southern state of Chiapas.

"It is clear that the crime in Acteal was prepared with the direction of state government officials and the complicity of various ministries of the national Government," the rebels said in a statement released on Saturday and signed by their charismatic leader, Subcomandante Marcos.

He accused the Government

of political domination in Chiapas.

"It is clear that the crime in Acteal was prepared with the direction of state government officials and the complicity of various ministries of the national Government," the rebels said in a statement released on Saturday and signed by their charismatic leader, Subcomandante Marcos.

He accused the Government

of building "a bloody and complex machinery of war" to annihilate the indigenous people.

Those accusations have been echoed in the capital, where a rock concert was held to protest against what organisers called the government-sponsored massacre.

One senior party official compared the killings with the bombing of the United States government building in Oklahoma City.

"They [the bombers] belonged to one of the political parties, the Republicans or the Democratic Party guilty of the bombing? Of course not," Alfredo Phillips, the party's coordinator of international affairs, told *The New York Times*.

Local indigenous groups, including the rebel Indian Zapatista National Liberation Army, have blamed the Government and President Zedillo. Señor Arias, they say, was merely a pawn in a fight

between the Zapatistas and the PRI.

But human rights groups and opposition politicians say party politics behind much of the tension and systematic harassment of the Chiapas Indians.

A climate of fear has been building for some time, and hundreds have died in clashes between PRI supporters and sympathisers of the Zapatistas.

Defiant Californian bars ready for 'Prohibition' raids over smoking ban

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN
IN NEW YORK

ALL of California except the great outdoors and private homes will effectively become one large no-smoking zone on New Year's Day.

As the new year begins, the latest measure in the state's panoply of anti-tobacco laws comes into force: a ban on smoking in all bars and casinos. With the exception of establishments on the state's American Indian reservations – which enjoy immunity from California's stringent smoking legislation – there can now be no puffing on

cigarettes, cigars or pipes in any "enclosed public space".

The forthcoming ban is the product of California's Smoke-free Workplace Act, which came into force on January 1, 1995. That law prohibited smoking in all "enclosed spaces at a place of employment", adding offices, shops, factories and restaurants to the already long list on no-smoking spaces, which then included all public buildings, such as bus and railway stations and even open-air baseball stadiums.

However, the 1995 law contained a two-year exemption for bars and

casinos, the product of lobbying by the owners' organisations, which argued that a ban would hit their takings particularly hard.

That two-year period has now ended, and the state's health authorities have indicated that they will be enforcing the ban to the best of their abilities. Television viewers have been treated to weeks of "warm-up" publicity, in which barsmaids are portrayed bemoaning their smoke-filled bars and giving thanks for the defiance to come. The publicity emphasises a study, published recently in the *Journal of the*

American Medical Association, which shows that California's waitresses have higher death rates from lung disease than any other US female occupational group.

Yet bar-owners across the state are hunting darkly at a campaign of civil disobedience, conjuring visions of Prohibition-style raids by the police and health officials on bars which flout the law.

Beverly Matlin-Swanson, the owner of the One Double Oh Seven Club in Santa Cruz said:

"What's next, red meat or coffee?

"We want to respect the law... but if we end up getting arrested and

have to litigate, well, let's just see how this plays out."

Another bar-owner, David Granlund, from Redondo Beach, said: "I think people are going to continue to smoke, absolutely." He has plans to establish a relief fund for fellow proprietors who are fined under the new law. The fine for the first offence is \$100 (£60), the second \$200 and the third \$500.

Opponents of the law have won the support of Brett Granlund, a Republican California assemblyman, who is himself a smoker. He has tabled technical questions to the State Department of Health

Services, asking for a clear definition of "enclosed space". Mr Granlund contends that the definition contained in the no-smoking law – "four walls and a ceiling" – is ambiguous, as to be unenforceable. He argues that bars and casinos should be considered "open spaces" if they keep their doors and windows open.

Inventively, he is also suggesting that owners of such establishments knock down one outer wall. Smokers could thus puff undisturbed, he argues, and California's climate is kind enough for this to be a viable option for many.

THE TIMES TUESDAY DECEMBER 30 1997

جامعة الملك عبد الله

Chickens gassed in Hong Kong war on flu virus

BY JAMES PRINGLE

HONG KONG government workers wielding knives or using poison gas yesterday began the slaughter of 13 million chickens, ducks, geese, caged pigeons, quail and other edible fowl in an attempt to eliminate a virus linked to avian flu.

In this unprecedented killing of every single domestic fowl in the territory, many birds were dispatched with a quick slitting of the throat.

The drastic elimination of poultry appeared largely backed by Hong Kong's anxious public, who have been crowding hospitals and clinics to have their colds and coughs checked lest they have the H5N1 avian flu virus.

This is an illness that in the past affected only chickens, but there is now a suggestion it can be transmitted between humans. There is no vaccine available to treat avian flu.

Hong Kong authorities are responding to public pressure to act decisively after four deaths, with 13 other residents confirmed as carriers and seven more as suspected carriers, according

to government figures. The incidence of the disease has spread fears of an epidemic. In 1968 a similar flu killed 40,000 people worldwide.

Health inspectors looked on at more than 1,000 stalls selling live poultry in Hong Kong as the killing began — a quick pulling back of each chicken's head and a swift slash at the throat — by workers, many called back from a holiday break. Near the carnage, people placidly ate meals.

On 160 chicken and 39 mixed poultry farms and two wholesale markets in the New Territories, birds were bundled into plastic containers into which carbon dioxide was pumped. At the poultry stalls, the dead or dying birds were pushed into black bin bags by seemingly nonchalant workers, many of them without masks or gloves.

The bags were sterilised with lime before being sent off for dumping in eight landfill sites; some critics say that the carcasses should be burnt to be sure the virus is eliminated. "Everybody is



Agriculture and Fisheries Department officials gather chickens in Hong Kong yesterday before gassing them inside a poultry farm

very busy right now with the operation," said a health official. "We hope to complete it in a day and a half." Most vendors promised compensation that could exceed £3.15 million, seemed to approve of

the action, having seen a recent drop in sales after confirmation of the disease last August. "It has to be done," said one vendor. "The germs have to be killed off." Once all birds have been

killed, a cleansing and disinfection programme will begin. Imports of fresh chicken will start only when all the cleaning has been carried out, an action likely to take at least a week. About 80 per

cent of Hong Kong's chickens reportedly come from China, where health standards are often low. Avian flu has struck another blow at Hong Kong's tourism industry, already reeling from the economic downturn in Asia. However, World Health Organisation officials say the small number of people affected makes it unnecessary to issue any travel advice.

Gangsters squeezing life out of Indian film industry

Bollywood is reeling from violent attacks worthy of its own output,

Christopher Thomas reports

BOLLYWOOD film-making has crashed, a victim of gangsters, censors, satellite television and an unprecedented run of box-office failures. Barely 16 of the 800-odd films produced in Bombay last year made money, threatening the world's biggest movie industry.

Mobsters finance much of Bollywood and interfere with the plots so that thugs are portrayed as avenging angels settling old injuries — a boring formula producing mediocre films of grotesque violence. A bare breast is banned by the board of censors, but it is acceptable to garrote a man and trail his innards across the screen.

Audiences are leaving in droves. So are financiers, both criminal and legitimate, who fear the golden era of Bollywood is over as videos and foreign films invade their territory. The underworld has spread terror through Bollywood, and daylight gun attacks on actors and filmmakers for defying their demands add to the despair.

Big-time actors and producers hide behind intense security: few escape death threats from extortionists. Film-makers no longer boast when a movie is successful, because it involves demands for money from mobsters linked with corrupt police and politicians. The nation's financial capital is effectively run by gangsters unchecked by suborned law enforcement agencies.

Two murders in particular stunned Bollywood this year. Mukesh Duggal, a producer, was killed for defying the underworld, and Gulshan Kumar, king of Hindi film music cassettes, was gunned down after offering prayers at a Bombay temple where he went twice a day.

Mobsters have gained control of powerful trade unions in Bombay and no business is safe from their rackets. Shiv Sena (Army of Shiv), a

thuggish right-wing political organisation that shares power in the city with the hardline Bharatiya Janata Party, has close ties with the underworld — a formidable nexus that answers neither to government nor the law.

Falling out with Shiv Sena is unwise. Sanjay Dutt, for years one of the biggest heart-throbs of the screen, was jailed in 1995 for alleged involvement in bomb attacks in which several landmark Bombay commercial buildings were wrecked. The allegations, which never stuck, were doubtless trumped up because he had angered Shiv Sena.

Eventually he was freed and required immediately to pay his respects at the home of Bal Thackeray, the Shiv Sena leader, who had been upset that the Dutt family gave shelter to Muslims during anti-Muslim riots. Such scenes scare away foreigners who might otherwise seek to do business in Bombay, which has the country's biggest market and busiest port.

Mobsters hire themselves to

landlords who want blocks of flats vacated, and to property

developers seeking to clear

land of slums. Politicians hire

them to kill or threaten rivals,

industrialists use them to

break strikes.

For decades film-makers

have relied on the mobsters

for funding. The Government

does not formally recognise

Bollywood as an industry, so

state banks are not allowed to

lend money for film-making,

forcing producers and direc-

tors into the arms of the

underworld.

The highest paid Hindi film

actors demand £200,000 a

film, but few are getting it

these days as Bollywood reels.

Some top actors are taking a

break because it is dangerous

to be seen to make money in

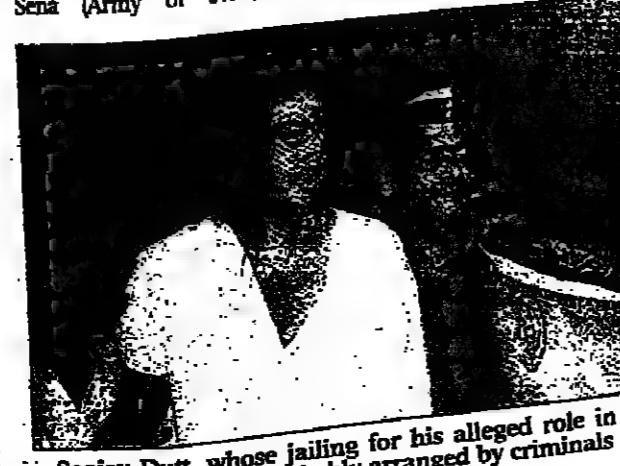
India's financial capital, a

paradox that bodes ill for the

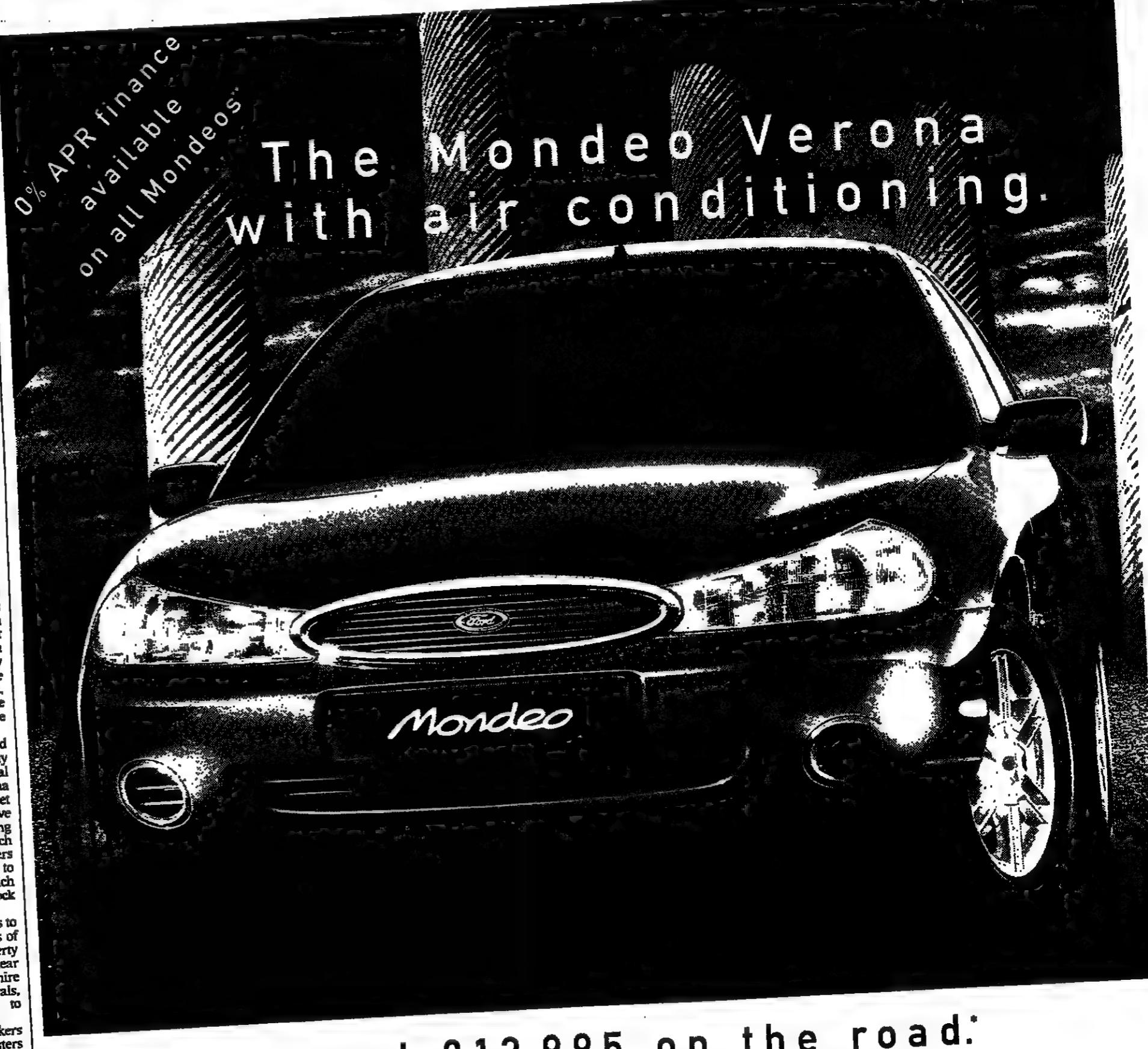
future of Hindi films and,

indeed, for Bombay.

POPPERFOTO



Sanjay Dutt, whose jailing for his alleged role in bomb attacks was probably arranged by criminals



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Aboriginal chiefs lay claim to great reef

FROM ROGER MAYNARD
IN SYDNEY

AUSTRALIA'S bitter debate about Aboriginal territorial rights took a new turn yesterday when indigenous leaders laid claim to thousands of square miles of coastal waters, including the Great Barrier Reef.

In a controversial move that could affect fishing and resorts along much of Australia's coastline, Aboriginal groups announced they had made more than 120 claims for sea rights from northern Queensland to Victoria's Bass Strait.

Professional fishermen said that, if the courts ruled in favour of Aborigines, the claims could ultimately destroy Australia's lucrative inshore fishing industry, worth more than £500 million. Bill Nagle, head of the Australian Seafood Industry Council, described the move as an "unnecessary act of aggression towards fishermen".

The latest Aboriginal claims follow a High Court ruling that Australia's indigenous people enjoy native title and access rights to land leased by farmers, and that the two could legally coexist.

I accept that I'm different

Moira Petty meets a musical prodigy with Asperger's syndrome who has just made a film

When Joseph Erber celebrated his 13th birthday in December, it was marked with a raucous karaoke party for his schoolfriends. Far from wincing at the shrieks that rent the air, his mother smiled broadly.

"It was such a racket. I was cheered by that," recalls Deborah Roberts, who uses her maiden name. "He used to absent himself from his own birthday parties. When the children arrived he would go to his room."

Joseph's lack of sociability is one symptom of Asperger's syndrome, a milder variant of autism that was diagnosed three years ago. Other symptoms include poor motor skills and hand-to-eye co-ordination, difficulty with sequencing, and obsessive-compulsive behaviour.

Yet Joseph is also a musical prodigy. His composing skills have been recognised by national arbiters of classical music. At 11, he won the Sainsbury Pictures for Schools prize for composition. Last March his work for piano and viola, commissioned by the London Symphony Orchestra's lead viola player, Edward Vanderspar, was performed by the LSO at the Barbican.

And if learning to live with both his extraordinary ability and his disability while also dealing with peer pressure were not enough, Joseph has turned the cameras on himself to film his own *Video Diaries* for BBC2.

In a slightly expressionless voice, he sighs: "Because I don't play sport well, it has given me a reputation as a stereotyped boffin, but I don't want to be like that. Other children say the pressure to write classical music is a bit sad, but as long as you enjoy it..."

The film shows Joseph trying to play football, loping aimlessly after the ball and rarely making contact, or helping to water the garden and managing to turn the hose on himself. In the flesh, although possessed of a certain shambling gait, there is little at first to separate him from any other gawky teenage boy.

Seated across a restaurant table, tucking into spaghetti, he gives an unblinking, long-lashed stare as he expounds on his philosophy of life. Then, for short periods, he seems to drift away, rattling his cutlery, gazing at the tablecloth and losing his grip on the conversation.

Joseph's interpersonal skills have improved greatly since he began therapy. He used to avoid eye contact, until the reason for it was explained to him. "I'm not mad," he says cheerfully. "I just need someone to talk to who won't take sides."

He is still prone to uncontrollable rages. Two hours earlier his father, James Erber, the avant-garde composer, had despaired of getting Joseph to London for our interview. Yet here he was, exhibiting formal good manners and pontificating on the ramifications of his parents' divorce in 1987. This means that every other weekend and for part of the holidays he shuttles between two homes in Sussex and southeast



At three Joseph Erber wrote the notes for a tune he called *My Mummy and Daddy*; by four he knew what his notation sounded like

London. "I'm not 100 per cent happy about that," he says. "Each household has a different way of doing things. But," he adds graciously, "they both employ good methods."

Complications include his father's remarriage to Morgan, a composer of musicals, and his mother's live-in partner, Bruno, an Italian sound engineer. "Sometimes I explain things wrong to Morgan and I get corrected. Then I tell her she's using the wrong tone of voice," says Joseph.

His relationship with Bruno, who cares for Joseph when his mother is away singing, can be explosive. On tape, against a background of flashing rain, Bruno pines for Rome. "What am I doing here, looking after this child who is always telling me what I should do because he knows better?" he says mournfully, adding: "Still, I do care for him."

Joseph, for his part, wants to be nice to Bruno. "I don't know how he can still find hope."

Joseph recorded 11 hours of tape for his video diary, condensed by the programme's editors into 50 minutes. Having seen a preview, Joseph has some criticisms. He is scathing of two scenes in which his mother man-

handles him up the stairs to bed and he boomerangs down again: "They're just trying to be funny and clever." His mother says these scenes are slapstick versions of her struggle to get Joseph to conform to normal behaviour. "He would not expose himself in his blackest moods for the cameras," she reveals. "He has flare-ups, like steam building up. He hasn't learnt to express disagreement and disappointment without rage. At one stage, it was very worrying."

Sometimes he wakes up in what I call an autistic mood. Time vanishes into a black hole while he reads cereal packets or is otherwise distracted. But within his terms he's considerate, and so loving. "We can't have ordinary beach holidays with him. We were at a beach one day and Joseph spent the whole morning getting sand on his feet and then rushing to the tap to wash it off. He also has certain bedtime rituals that he wouldn't allow to be filmed. The pillows have to be dead centre, the bed has to be knocked against the wall three times, his slippers have to go under it.

"We use humour most of the time to get through this. He says 'I've got to do my rituals now', and I laugh and say: 'Well, I'm going downstairs then.' Joseph, too, sees comedy as a useful tool. "I've discovered a new, funny side of me. It's helped me to accept that I am different from other boys. It's hard not to go on and on about things. I've got a BBC2 kind of humour: I laugh and laugh about certain words and the other kids don't understand."

Joseph says his early years were "spent in a dream". His father recalls problems Joseph had following a film or pantomime. "He would ask the most basic questions. 'Who's that? What are they doing?' He couldn't understand emotional relationships. This Christmas he watched *Oliver!* on television and followed it for the first time."

Mr Erber believes that the non-representational aspect of music is a strong attraction for Joseph. At three, he wrote the notes for a tune he called *My Mummy and Daddy*; by four he knew what his notation sounded like. He took up the violin at five and the piano at seven. "I went through a phase of wanting to give up the violin

but my mother said it would be useful if I wanted to be a good composer."

Joseph, who watches *EastEnders*, plays computer games, and is fascinated by high-profile court cases, has recently begun listening to pop music. "It would be easy for me to play pop songs and get them in the charts. I could pay off the mortgage."

Video Diaries follows Joseph's progress in a recent music composition competition. His father declares that he would be "over the moon" if any of his much older students produced work of Joseph's calibre.

His mother is seen exclaiming "God almighty" at what seems to be his lack of progress.

"If he has a deadline, he must be responsible," she explains. "I am not ambitious for him. I'm only concerned that he develops his full potential as a person. I'm prouder of the progress he's made in controlling his temper than of his talent."

"I don't worry about his future. I was sickened by one expert who said he was unlikely to marry. He'll make a wonderful husband for the right girl who understands him."

• *Video Diaries* will be shown on January 3 at 10.55pm on BBC2.

Don't go on holiday without the right jabs

The Christmas tree lights are still burning but even now the summer holiday brochures are beginning to arrive. Only a third will offer any advice on health, and even when they do it is usually only in general terms.

Forty-one million overseas trips were taken by British travellers in 1995, about 25 per cent to some faraway place designated as an "at risk destination" by doctors. These are the areas where the visitor — whether holidaymaker, business traveller, backpacking student or a returning expatriate — is at risk of acquiring a clinically significant infection.

Travellers are confused about the degree of risk: four out of ten are unaware of any threat to their health that might be posed by their destination, and one in ten, although fully aware of the risks, refuses to have appropriate vaccinations or to take prophylactic measures, such as anti-malarial treatment, even if it has been offered.

The vaccines needed to prevent infection will be in the doctor's refrigerator rather than in the patient's own medicine chest, but are no less important for that reason in preserving the household's health during the year.

The latest dispute to hit the NHS is over who should pay for such vaccinations. Previous governments of both political parties have always decreed that public health considerations demanded that the NHS should foot the bill for protection against any disease which, although frequently caught overseas, might later pose a health threat to the overall community once the traveller had returned. Hence the NHS paid for immunisation against diseases such as hepatitis A and B, typhoid, polio, tetanus and diphtheria, but conversely the travellers had to pay for injections against such conditions as rabies and yellow fever, where the risk was posed only to the bitten person.

Putting a stray dog in Bangkok, for instance, is a risky business, because at least 4 per cent of them have rabies, and each year a potentially rabid dog bites 100,000 people in the city, but the risk is entirely to the individual.

The dangers of relaxing efforts to inoculate travellers is a real one. Hepatitis A, which is easily prevented by simple injections, is caught by one in 300 unprotected visitors to luxury tourist hotels during annual holidays spent in risk areas. In the middle-aged and older it has an appreciable mortality of about 2 per cent. The risk is much greater in students and other hardy travellers who prefer to camp or backpack; one in 50 is also grossly negligent, for instance, for people to take their children to areas where meningitis is common — such as The Gambia and Kenya, without obtaining protection against the local strains which can, fortunately, be prevented by inoculation. Everyone who travels, even to southern Europe and the Mediterranean, should be protected against hepatitis A, and preferably B, as well as typhoid.

All those who hope to have a holiday overseas should also be up-to-date with their immunisation against diphtheria, polio and tetanus.

MEDICINE CHEST

DR THOMAS STUTTAFFORD

economy as the treatment of infectious caught overseas, now running at about £12 million a year, is not the only call on the Exchequer. The average case of hepatitis A involves 40 days off work. And many of the diseases caught overseas may involve benefit payment to the sufferers and their families for months or even years.

When booking next year's holiday, the householder should think about the health implications of the destination chosen and should consult his local GP or travel clinic about what is needed for his family's protection. Unfortunately, 14 per cent of GPs do not have the latest information, and 10 per cent of travel agents are unaware of health risks.

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What I need is more rest, says Rachel Morris

The big sleep



Sleep will soon be the kindest present you can give to friends

made my head begin to nod, and no sooner did I crawl under it than I was off to sleep as quick as a baby at the bottle (so the saying goes — mine never did). Even the children fell prey to the duvet's wondrous powers and could be found, at last, wending their way towards the double bed, eyes shut, thumbs in mouths, comforters trailing behind them. We loved that duvet. After each other and the children it was the next thing we would have rescued if the house burnt down.

These days there is only one thing that anyone who has everything is unlikely to have, and that is sufficient sleep. The way things are going, sleep will soon be the kindest present you can give to your friends. We used to know a couple of diplomats who, being well ahead of their time, would organise sleeping Sunday lunches. If you turned up at their house on a Sunday afternoon, you would find a room full of men nodding off in front of the television, while in the next room women were doing the same in front of the

TV. Dimly you could hear the sounds of children playing at the top of the house. All the hostess had to do was to right the glasses that were slipping from our sleepy fingers and keep the children happy on another floor.

At five o'clock or so she would hand round chocolates and strong coffee to rouse her guests. They were sleep on the most Sundays I can remember.

But then our friends took other diplomatic postures and now there's a dearth of sleeping Sunday lunches, in our part of London at least. So I would like to announce to everyone I know that we are saving up for a new double bed and that, once we have equipped it with more pillows and new bed linen and another wondrous duvet, you can all come to sleep on it, although I fear it will be a little crowded with small children and their toys.

And, it goes without saying, sleep is all that anyone has in mind.

HUMAN SCIENCE FORUM

What makes you the way you are?

WHAT determines human behaviour? This controversial question will be debated by two of the world's leading scientists, Steven Pinker and Steven Rose, at a forum on Wednesday, January 21.

Professor Pinker argues that what people do is largely determined by their genes. But Professor Rose believes that human beings are able to shape their own lives and that to assume otherwise is socially and politically dangerous.

Chaired by Dr Susan Blackmore, the forum at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1, at 8pm, marks the publication of Pinker's *How the Mind Works* (Allen Lane, £20) and Rose's *Lifelines* (Allen Lane, £20). The admission price of £10 (concessions £7.50) includes £2 off the price of either book.

THE HUMAN SCIENCE FORUM

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“A cracking sexual energy.”

Ryan Gilbey THE INDEPENDENT

“A cracking sexual energy.”

Anniversaries of 1998

Next year marks a half-century of the NHS and Prince Charles's 50th birthday. Jack Lonsdale highlights the year's important celebrations

JANUARY

4 Independence of the Union of Burma, 1948.
 9 Caroline Herschel (1750-1848), astronomer, died Hanover.
 Dame Gracie Fields (1898-1979), actress and singer, born Rochdale.
 13 Publication of Zola's *J'accuse* condemning the Dreyfus prosecution, 1898.
 14 Lewis Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) (1832-98), novelist and mathematician, died Guildford.
 16 Charles Pelham Villiers (1802-98), statesman, died London.
 18 Henry George Liddell (181-98), Greek lexicographer, died Ascot.
 Matthew ("Captain") Webb (1848-83), the first Channel swimmer (1875), born Dawley, Shropshire.
 19 Isaac D'Israeli (1766-1848), author, died Bradenham, Buckinghamshire.
 August Comte (1798-1857), French philosopher, born Montpellier.
 23 Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948), Russian film director, born Riga.
 26 Christian Neefe (1748-1798), German conductor and composer, died Dessau.
 28 Vittorio Rieti (1898-1994), Italian composer, born Alexandria, Egypt.
 30 Mahandas Karamchand



The Depths of the Sea by Sir Edward Burne-Jones (died London, June 1898)

Gandhi (1869-1948), Indian leader, assassinated Delhi.
 Orville Wright (1871-1948), American aviation pioneer, died Dayton, Ohio.
 31 Karl Reissiger (1798-1859), German conductor and composer, born Bézig.

FEBRUARY

1 Elikana Settle (1628-1724), poet, born Dunstable.
 Alvar Aalto (1898-1976), Finnish architect, born Kuortane.
 4 Edward George Villiers Stanley, 17th Earl of Derby (1865-1948), politician, died Knowsley, Lancashire.
 10 Bertrand Brecht (1898-1956), German poet and playwright, born Augsburg.
 11 Thomas Cole (1801-48), American painter, died Catskill, New York.
 15 Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), philosopher and jurist, born London.
 24 Grant Allen (1848-99), novelist and man of science, born Alvington, Canada.
 26 Thomas Cooke (1782-1848), singer and composer, died London.
 The Second Republic proclaimed in France, 1848.
 27 Sir Charles Parry, Bt. (1848-1918), composer, born Bournemouth.
 29 Robert Barrington-Ward (1891-1948), Editor of *The Times*, 1941-48, died at sea.

MARCH

1 Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907), American sculptor, born Cornish, New Hampshire.
 5 William Shield (1748-1829), violinist and composer, born Whickham, Durham.
 Felice Cavallotti (1842-98), Italian poet and politician, killed in a duel, Rome.
 10 John Playfair (1748-1819), geologist, born near Dundee.
 Jan Masaryk (1886-1948), Czech statesman, died Prague.
 11 Dorothy Gish (1898-1968), American actress, born Massillon, Ohio.
 15 Sir Henry Bessemer (1813-98), engineer and inventor, died London.

Solid wood armchair with plywood seat, created in 1932 by the furniture designer Alvar Aalto (born in Kuortane, Finland, February 1898).



The Soviet film director Sergei Eisenstein, creator of such classics as *Battleship Potemkin*, was born in 1898

Bl (1833-98), painter, died London.
 Erich Maria Remarque (1898-1970), German novelist, born Osnabrück.

23 Winifred Holtby (1898-1935), novelist and social reformer, born Yorkshire.

24 The Berlin airlift began, 1948, ending on September 30, 1949.

26 Willy Messerschmitt (1898-1978), German aircraft designer, born Frankfurt am Main.

28 Abraham Ortelius (1527-98), cartographer, died Antwerp.

29 Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837), Italian poet, born Recanati.

JULY

1 Britain acquired a 99-year lease on Hong Kong, 1898.

3 Joshua Slocum (1844-c.1910) completed the first solo sailing round the world, 1898.

4 Vicomte François René Chateaubriand (1768-1848), French author and diplomat, died Paris.

6 Gertrude Lawrence (1898-1952), actress, born London.

7 The National Health Service came into operation, 1948.

15 Gaetano Pugnani (1791-1848), Italian violinist and composer, died Turin.

17 Ralph David Blumenfeld (1864-1948), journalist, died Dumfries, Essex.

18 William Gilbert Grace (1848-1915), cricketer, born Downend, near Bristol.

19 Gilbert Sheldon (1598-1677), Archbishop of Canterbury (1663-77), born Derbyshire.

20 Johanna Bodmer (1698-1783), Swiss historian, born Greifensee.

23 D.W. Griffith (1875-1948), American film director, died Hollywood.

24 Dame Agnes Hunt (1866-1948), pioneer in working among the disabled, died Baschurch, Shropshire.

25 Arthur James Balfour, first Earl of Balfour (1848-1930), Prime Minister 1902-05, born Whittingehame, East Lothian.

27 Vladimir de Pachmann (1848-1923), Russian pianist, born Odessa.

28 Otto von Bismarck, Prince (1815-98), first German Chancellor, died Friedrichsruh.

29 Henry Moore (1898-1986), French painter, born Paris.

31 Sir Edward Burne-Jones, died.

ET ALICIA

31 Robert Planquette (1848-1903), French composer, born Paris.

AUGUST

1 Nelson defeated the French fleet at the battle of the Nile, 1798.

3 Charles Garnier (1825-98), French architect, died Paris.

5 Albert Frederick Pollard (1869-1948), historian, died Mithford-on-Sea.

6 William Cecil, Lord Burghley (1527-98), statesman, died London.

8 Eugene Boudin (1824-98), French painter, died Deauville.

9 Frederick Marryat (1792-1848), novelist, died Norfolk.

12 George Stephenson (1781-1848), pioneer of railways, died near Chesterfield.

13 Ramesh Chunder Dutt (1848-1909), Indian politician and author, born Calcutta.

14 Jean Borotra (1898-1994), French tennis player, born Paris.

15 Gustave Moreau (1826-98), French painter, died Paris.

17 Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837), Italian poet, born Recanati.

19 Emily Brontë (1818-48), novelist and poet, died Haworth.

23 Robert Barclay (1648-90), Quaker, born Gordonstown.

25 Georges Rodenbach (1855-98), Belgian poet, died Paris.

28 Thomas Henderson (1798-1844), astronomer, born Dundee.

29 Claude Conder (1848-1910), Palestine explorer and scholar, born Cheltenham.

31 Sir Malcolm Campbell (1885-1948), racing motorist, died Reigate.

Wales 1920-34, born Llanymawddwy, Merionethshire.

12 Umberto Giordano (1867-1949), Italian composer, died Milan.

14 The Prince of Wales, born Buckingham Palace, 1948.

19 Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763-98), United Irishman, committed suicide, Dublin.

21 René Magritte (1898-1967), Belgian painter, born Lessines.

23 Étienne Joseph Floquet (1748-1785), French composer, born Aix-en-Provence.

25 Isaac Watts (1674-1748), hymn writer, died Stoke Newington, London.

28 Conrad Ferdinand Meyer (1825-98), Swiss poet, died Kilchberg.

DECEMBER

4 Luigi Galvani (1737-98), Italian physician, died Bologna.

7 Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), Italian sculptor, born Naples.

9 Joel Chandler Harris (1848-1908), American humorist, short-story writer, born Eatonton, Georgia.

10 Emily Brontë (1818-48), novelist and poet, died Haworth.

23 Robert Barclay (1648-90), Quaker, born Gordonstown.

25 Georges Rodenbach (1855-98), Belgian poet, died Paris.

28 Thomas Henderson (1798-1844), astronomer, born Dundee.

29 Claude Conder (1848-1910), Palestine explorer and scholar, born Cheltenham.

31 Sir Malcolm Campbell (1885-1948), racing motorist, died Reigate.

Actress Dorothy Gish, born March 1898, in *Turning the Tables*

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The last of Africa's big men

Trevor Royle on three dictators trapped in a time warp

Kenya's Daniel arap Moi is one of the last of Africa's big men. Like his near neighbours Robert Mugabe and Kenneth Kaunda, he is a relic of the post-colonial period, holding on to power whatever the consequences for his country and its people by sidelining or imprisoning opponents and surrounding himself with ultra-national security forces.

All three are locked in a time warp at the centre of political power in, respectively, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Zambia. All are in their seventies and all seem to be living in an age that is slowly disappearing from memory — the bad old days when African rulers depended on tribal loyalties, violence, and political skulduggery to remain in office.

President Moi became virtual dictator of Kenya in 1978 when he created a one-party state, eliminated his opponents and printed huge numbers of banknotes to pay for his increasingly expensive tastes. The results were a disaster for Kenya, which at independence in 1963 was one of Africa's most settled and well-run countries. Today the average annual wage is \$280, unemployment is endemic and the most optimistic forecast for this year's growth in gross domestic product is a meagre 2 per cent.

Despite the economic problems and the country's increasingly fragile infrastructure, Moi will be voted back into office simply because he has been in power for so long that his associates know how to manipulate the electorate. As happened in earlier elections, voters have been harassed, vote-rigging is commonplace and in many rural areas votes have been sold for cash.

By contrast, Zimbabwe seems to be a haven of contentment but, in fact, is struggling under a post-colonial legacy. Last month Mugabe decided to push ahead with plans to forcibly purchase 1,503 farms and to redistribute them to guerrilla fighters who had supported him during the years of confrontation with white Rhodesian rule. It was a promise which he has taken a long time to make good. He came to power in 1980 and in that time Zimbabwe, like Kenya, has become a one-party state with a cowed Opposition. For example, there has never been a satisfactory investigation into the notorious Matabeleland massacres of 1982 which claimed the lives of thousands of Mugabe's opponents.

The controversial land reform programme is a timely measure for Mugabe because it will deflect growing internal criticism of the declining economy and an absence of civil rights. It certainly does not make financial sense. Economists have forecast that it could bankrupt the country's treasury, but for Mugabe that is beside the point. Zimbabwe is hovering on the brink of unprecedented political unrest after a series of communal demonstrations and for the first time workers protesting

against tax increases and wage cuts have been joined by veterans of the civil war.

Like Moi, Mugabe depends on a fragmented Opposition and these have served him well. But even out of power African big men are still powers in the land. At present Kaunda is in confinement on treason charges but such has been the strength of the international outcry at his arrest that the name of the former Zambian President still counts for something.

What makes this triumvirate's survival so arresting is that it goes against the tide which has been sweeping through Africa since the end of the Cold War. Rulers can no longer rely on support from the rival superpowers and thereby enrich themselves. To attract foreign investors, governments have had to tackle corruption and call a halt to unnecessarily grandiose public works. In other words, the free-market economy has been embraced and old dictatorial methods of government are being consigned to time's wastepaper basket.

And it is working. In war-torn Uganda, for many years one of Africa's heart-sink cases, President Yoweri Museveni has succeeded in restoring order by de-mystifying the power of the gun and by patching up local ethnic differences. Earlier this year, Zaire rid itself of 27 years of misrule by President Mobutu when an armed revolt supported by moderate neighbours put paid to his personal greed and his refusal to institute reforms. There is even hope in Ethiopia and Mali, once in decline, where a new generation of rulers realises that social progress is assisted by economic reform and that the days of open-ended aid programmes have gone for ever.

It is against that backdrop that Moi and his fellow *wabenzis* (owners of Mercedes cars) are operating in Kenya. Using the tools which have served them so well in the past to hold on to power, they continue to mock international demands for reform. Time, though, is not on their side. Not only are the international institutions refusing to honour loans unless corruption and bribery are ended, but history is against them.

Some of the worst concomitants to the end of colonial rule in Africa — the breakdown in civil authority, the internecine wars, the executions of political opponents, the widespread venality and the squandering of natural resources — are increasingly a thing of the past.

Like most countries in Africa, Kenya no longer needs a big man like Moi: it needs someone capable of clearing up all the damage he has inflicted on this once prosperous country.

Trevor Royle is the author of Winds of Change: The End of Empire in Africa, published by John Murray.



Making a hash of dope

Tabloid hysteria over a Cabinet minister's son demonstrates the need for an adult look at cannabis and the law

Reprehensible, I know: speaking for the League of Anxious Mothers I admit that I do not wish my own children to be offered little plastic packets by the offspring of the Labour Cabinet. Not even if, for some unaccountable teenage reason, the said children have just spent half-an-hour pretending to be drug-obsessed estate agents.

But you have to feel for the lad: terrified, embarrassed, criminalised for something his peers do constantly and terrified about his custodial sentence and his A levels. At that age, children have been brainwashed by our neurotic education system into thinking that if they fail exams their life is ruined.

He will also be mortified for his father. To protect a sensational (if mouldy) revelation, one of my ghastliest memories is from

spending student vacations living in the apartment over the British Consulate-General in Hamburg, where my father worked. A couple of university friends crashed out there one night in sleeping-bags after a night in the bierkeller. In the morning, when the strangely euphoric bearded one left, I found a trifoliate of crumbly resin under the cushions. I had no particular moral courage — few abstaining students do, only preferring to stay legal to avoid bother — but before my eyes flashed visions of German police sniffer dogs, diplomatic immunity invoked and disputed headlines saying "Diplomat's drug shame".

Still, as a nation we need to look dispassionately at cannabis. The time has passed for Government to meet any mention of it by hiding its eyes and shrieking of it like a Victorian miss with a mouse up her skirt. It is shameful that we are even prevented from exploring the medical uses of the drug for the terminally ill. And while the real, hard drug war has to be fought, it is hard to see why Downing Street should recoil in horror from the idea of adults sining around giggling stupidly and turning themselves into lifelong sad old

bones, harming nobody else, while it continues to throw drink parties celebrating the yob culture of Formula 1 and Noel Gallagher and Chris Evans. Not to mention favouring the idea of homosexual consent at the confused age of 16.

I am not one of those who would free the drug from all controls; but even cautious pessimism can see that cannabis is not a voodoo curse or a deadly virus. It is an ancient substance with both bad and good effects: a practical problem needing practical management. If hard drugs are the real enemy, note that in The Netherlands the separate treatment of hard and soft drugs has at least led to a situation where the average age of heroin addicts is steadily rising.

They have fewer young converts towards heroin by the need to frequent an underworld in order to get cannabis. In Dutch coffee-shops where marijuana is tolerated there is a government leaflet advising limited use and baldly saying: "You can smoke every day, but you will permanently lose much with reality. In the end it is up to you whether you deal with cannabis in a sensible way."

Libby Purves

which only dares promote the childless and the very old?

Secondly, the boy must not be "made an example of" to satisfy the spite of his father's political opponents. Custody is unthinkable. The last person I can remember being caught dealing hash by a newspaper trick (*News of the World*) was another celebrity daughter, though much older, who escaped prison on the ground that she had children to look after. Well, so has this lad: he has himself to look after, and probably will after this fright. Probation will do.

Thirdly, as a nation we need to look dispassionately at cannabis. The time has passed for Government to meet any mention of it by hiding its eyes and shrieking of it like a Victorian miss with a mouse up her skirt.

It is shameful that we are even prevented from exploring the medical uses of the drug for the terminally ill. And while the real, hard drug war has to be fought, it is hard to see why Downing Street should recoil in horror from the idea of adults sining around giggling stupidly and turning themselves into lifelong sad old

Beware of repetitive soul strain

Too much data can be dangerous, says Richard Chartres

Changes in the way we communicate have profound implications. In the past, such changes led to the opening up of new sources of spiritual and moral authority and the eclipse of older patterns. The invention of the printing press, for example, gave people the opportunity to study texts in private — reducing the power of institutions to control information.

And now, as the Information Age gathers speed, a new world view is emerging. The Industrial Age was dominated by machines fashioning raw materials into products. The world view associated with this was fundamentally materialistic, with matters of the human spirit relegated to the leisure sector.

The technology of the Information Age communicates a different message, making it increasingly implausible to regard human beings as simply machines upon whom the mould of consciousness has grown. The question of the spirit will again be at the heart of educational and medical strategies.

Worldwide access to information through the Internet creates great opportunities to solve environmental problems, improve healthcare and education and create a global market. But it would be naive to suppose that access to previously undreamt of quantities of information might not affect the user.

In 1830 it took up to eight months for a letter from England to reach India. By 1870 a telegram could arrive in Bombay in five hours. The Existentialist Kierkegaard reflected on this uncoupling of space and time, stating: "The evil in the daily press consists in its being calculated to make, if possible, the passing moment a thousand or ten thousand times more inflated and important than it really is. But all moral elevation consists first and foremost in being weaned from the momentary." The hyping of the momentary has the paradoxical and anaesthetising effect of reducing everything to a dull average.

The availability of so many facts can be seriously addictive; the novelist R.L. Stevenson once said that the habit of acquiring general information could even prove fatal if it was not curbed early. Today there are more ways than ever to acquire it. A recent report titled *Glued to the Screen*, published by Reuters, has given details of so-called "infodaddies" and "dantholism" worldwide. Concern has prompted calls for reviews of the products and policies of the global corporations on the superhighway and some of their questionable but money-making material.

The "virtual" market results in a loss of face-to-face communication, with its many visual and other cues. While there are obvious advantages in some fields to be able to consider data on screen without being distracted, there remains a gulf between transmitting information and communicating the kind of wisdom which informs the agents of moral choice. T.S. Eliot in one of the choruses from *The Rock* asks:

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

It is a question of balance and of recognising the limits of technology, but if there is an overdose of "disintermediated" rather than personal interactions, what will this do to an individual over a long period?

It might further feed contemporary bias towards viewing the world in subject-to-object terms. The technology of the new information environment is an expression of this cultural bias and a reinforcement of it. Individuals become progressively desensitised to subject-to-subject interactions, and the faculties of perception which enable such communication can atrophy. Excessive exposure to information technology might cause repetitive soul strain.

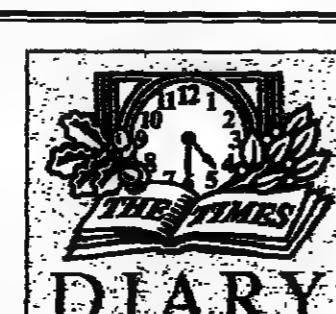
A survey in the magazine *Nature* revealed the impact of a "visual diet" on cats. It suggested that the visual world inhabited by the kittens affected the way their brains developed. If they were allowed to see only horizontal stripes during the first months of their lives, the nerve cells in the brain that perceive vertical information failed to develop. For the rest of their lives they bumped into chair or table legs. Individuals are formed partly by what they see and the question of the visual diet in childhood is a vital one.

There are obvious challenges but this is not an excuse for the dangerous luxury of pessimism and doom-mongering which seems to be a particular vice of the comfortably placed. The feast of Advent is the time for addressing the future not only by projecting present trends, which as a method of prediction has a very poor record, but by envisaging the future in anticipatory sketches and essays. While sharing a vision of what is to be achieved in human terms with the aid of new technology, we need to cherish forums of personal communication and the exploration of silence and contemplative development. This will create choice-makers fit for the unprecedented opportunities of the Information Age.

The author is the Bishop of London

Bad heir day

THE legacy of William Ewart Gladstone is likely to be the unlikely political battleground in the new year. The centenary of the great Liberal Prime Minister's death will be marked by a plethora of commemorative events at Westminster Abbey, Eton and Oxford University. And that is where the trouble starts. A senior politician is to make a further tribute before a large audience in Westminster Hall. Already the jockeying has begun to make the speech next May. Will it be Baroness Thatcher, who praised the four-time PM's policy of low taxation? Or Tony Blair, who has already claimed Lloyd George as an inspiration? Or, finally, will it be Paddy Ashdown, who surely must still have a claim to speak for Liberal England? The Gladstone clan has views. "We hope that Tony Blair will be guest of honour and lay the wreath at Gladstone's plaque," says one. "It might hurt Paddy Ashdown's feelings but we want someone a bit higher." But Paddy will not give up his predecessor's legacy without a fight. "Gladstone was without question the greatest Prime Minister we have ever had," he tells me. "He was the first politician to appeal directly to the people and trust their judgment." Shouldn't he do the honours at the ceremony, then? "That's a matter for the parties to discuss at the time. But I can say that a senior Labour minister told me recently: 'We're



American airmen during the Second World War — some of whom never returned. "She was great," says Peter Hill, publican. "She was just like your favourite grandmother. She told us that if we wanted any help deciphering the signatures, all we had to do was ring the American embassy. She was accompanied by about seven Secret Service agents and said she didn't want any fuss."

Sit. Vac.

A LIBERAL MP is looking for love. And perhaps unusually for an orange type, the lover must be female. To this end, Norman Baker has made a new year's resolution to acquire a girlfriend. The usual political mistresses (short skirts, easy morals, extensive repertoire) need not apply. "I would like her to

be very eco-friendly, with principles, who can cope with somebody who is idiosyncratic," says Baker, a sensitive sort who has so far been unlucky. "It would be nice to have a loving relationship next year. I don't want a political wife, an appendage, I am looking for a soulmate." So why has it taken our Norman, 40, so long to find a wife? An unkind opponent has called him "a bore of hurricane proportions", and he admits to having watched every Queen's Speech since he was "in short trousers". But Baker, actually very engaging, offers a different excuse: "Trying to

be elected as a Liberal Democrat is a fulltime occupation."

• **MO MOWLAM'S** miserable Christmas started early. Stung by criticism that she had been steering clear of Army bases (to stay with her Sinn Fein chums) she tried to find some military types for a Christmas photocall. A long hunt ensued until Mahon Barracks, Portadown, agreed to muck mince pies with her. "They think she should have learnt Chamberlain's lesson — that appeasing terrorists never works," says Bob McCartney, a UK Unionist MP. The main cause of their anger? Maze prisoners were given ten days Christmas break; most of the Forces got five.

With the fairies

LATEST bulletin from How the Outrageous have become Outraged Department. Pamela Stephenson, a television "personality" who once whipped off the trousers of presenter Nick Owen on air, was seen on Sunday giving a lecture to her husband, Billy Connolly, on the subject of taste. The couple were with their children outside the Royal Academy discussing the merits of the Sensation exhibition. "I know all about it and it is quite unsuitable for children," said Ms



Artful dodger: Stephenson

Stephenson, who now plies her trade as a shrink in LA, Mr Connolly, summoning his Glaswegian sensibilities, pointed out the show's artisitic value. At that, Ms Stephenson marched off with children in hand to the academy's fairy display, leaving Connolly to enjoy the studies of Hindley et al. in more appreciative company — many of them, oddly, children.

JASPER GERARD

BEN HILL

PHILIPPE





BENEFITS IN KIND

Tories have sound reasons to support welfare reform

Absence, it would appear, can make the mind grow sharper. Chris Patten's comments yesterday that the Conservatives should endorse rather than exploit Tony Blair's stand on welfare reform deserve serious consideration. The Tories will soon determine their response to the issue that is likely to dominate Parliament and politics in 1998. Mr Patten's intervention is interesting as, for much of his career, he has been an admirer of the post-1945 social settlement. That a figure associated with the paternalist section of his party has accepted the need for radical welfare reform is in itself significant.

There are three compelling reasons why the Conservatives should support Mr Blair's efforts to reconstruct the welfare state principle, politics, and plausibility. Of these, the first is the most important. It has long been an article of faith among Tories that the British welfare state has been constructed on dubious assumptions, is excessively expensive, and is extraordinarily ineffective in its stated task of eradicating poverty. On this basis, Peter Lilley, as Social Security Secretary, undertook a review of benefits in the last Parliament. Although incremental and not fundamental, his efforts were the single most impressive set of actions by a minister in the Major administration. The Tories should therefore welcome the Prime Minister's willingness to build on them.

It would also be shrewd politics. The Conservatives will win little support from an opportunistic resistance to the Government. The Child Poverty Action Group is not waiting for its moment to annoy William Hague. If, instead, the Tories back the Prime Minister and urge him to think not only the unthinkable but the unthought, they will only increase the widespread unease felt on the Labour left. Conservative Party enthusiasm makes Campaign Group rebellion inevitable. This would leave the impression, if inaccurate,

that Mr Blair actually needed Tory help to enact a central part of his agenda.

There is also the simple point of plausibility. The Conservatives will lack credibility if they oppose welfare reform. Mr Hague in a baseball cap or sipping cocktails at the Notting Hill Carnival is one thing; chaining himself to a wheelchair is another. The Conservatives have tried this already through their ill-considered opposition to the introduction of tuition fees for higher education. The sight of Stephen Dorrell seeking succour from the National Union of Students was utterly embarrassing. The Tories rendered themselves ridiculous. As a consequence, their broader views on the Dearing report are virtually irrelevant.

Mr Hague's approach on welfare reform must be entirely different. He should announce that he will adopt a bipartisan approach. That said, he can offer two constructive critiques. The first is that the exercise should not be annexed by the Treasury. Ethics as well as expenditure matter. The predominant reasons why people should be encouraged, and then obliged, to move from welfare to work is because it is in their own social and economic interest. Work would be the better option if the social security budget were £100 million rather than £100 billion.

His second argument should be that welfare reform is but part of a wider effort to redefine the relationship between the individual and the State. The most enlightened Republicans in the United States have embraced the notion of "empowerment" – an activist conservatism that seeks to enable the poor to take control of their own lives. The Prime Minister may sympathise with this but the overwhelming majority of his party does not. Mr Hague should seek to outflank new Labour not through opposition but agreement. It is also the position that would benefit his party and the country.

PHOENIX BERLIN

The irresistible rise of Germany's reborn capital city

The Berlin Airlift, which began fifty years ago next June, was the West's response to Stalin's attempt to starve West Berlin into submission. Had he succeeded, he would have consolidated the Soviet satellite in East Germany, and perhaps prevented the emergence of a West German state which was to become the linchpin of Nato. The travails of Berlin then and the city's triumph now provide a powerful metaphor for the dramatic recovery of Germany and the last eclipse of communism's dark shadow.

Three years of tension came to a crunch in June 1948, when the Allies, under pressure to end the postwar hyperinflation, allowed the currency reform devised by Ludwig Erhard and blessed by Konrad Adenauer, to go ahead. This was a political as well as an economic gamble: overnight, fortunes were wiped out in favour of a virtual tabula rasa. For the first time since the war, Germans in the Western sectors could trade not just in US dollars or packets of American cigarettes, but in a new and surprisingly hard currency: the Deutsche Mark. To the Russians, this was the ultimate provocation. It ensured that the division of Germany would endure; and its success would be a decisive victory for capitalism.

Stalin decided to retaliate against the isolated Western sectors of Berlin. The German siege of Leningrad had cost many hundreds of thousands of Russian lives, and it was assumed by the Kremlin that the Allies would not tolerate that level of civilian casualties, and would cave in. The blockade began on June 24, 1948, and lasted until September 23, 1949. In order to break the siege, 277,264 supply flights were flown – an unprecedented effort which cost the lives of



loved, by all Germans as their capital – and it never will be.

And yet Berlin is again becoming capital of a united Germany. In the aftermath of reunification the Bundestag voted to move itself a thousand miles eastwards, back to the old Reichshauptstadt, in 1999. Following the precedent of the Weimar Republic, many Germans have begun to call the postwar period the "Bonn Republic". One day we may speak of the new Germany as the "Berlin Republic". The past 50 years, from physical resurrection to political rehabilitation, have been about surviving external threats. The next half-century is more likely to be about overcoming internal paralysis.

A NATIONAL TREASURE

One man's battle to rescue the glories of the country house

Polesden Lacey, Dyrham Park, The Vyne, Ham House; the rounded old names call the roll of a heritage, a fabric of the past that we cannot now imagine as other than securely held in trust. To walk through their rich interiors, their gardens and parklands and even their kitchen quarters is to open a channel in the mind through which aesthetic delight mixes with curiosity about the past and admiration for the panache of their proud creators. In the words of James Lees-Milne, they are "the people's palaces of our time" much as the cathedral was for those of the Middle Ages. They seem indescribably ours. Yet their survival is owed, in literally hundreds of cases, to the passion, expertise and not least the social skills of this one man.

In 1936, when the young Lees-Milne landed his ill-paid and rather humble job with the National Trust, it was primarily concerned with preserving landscape. As secretary to the trust's new country houses committee, he rode his bicycle or drove the trust's unreliable car up long drives, knocked on great portals and, to families whose pride it was to have lived there for centuries, put the case for making over their magnificent houses to the nation.

His work was to span more than half a century and to include not just the grandest structures but those he affectionately

described as the "illustrious obscure" gems of domestic architecture. The assessment of mullions and panes, pierced balustrades, mouldings and wainscoting, was the easier part. Lord Esher sent him on his travels with the words: "You will find 90 per cent of country house owners sympathetic; 10 per cent odious and 100 per cent eccentric." As Lees-Milne was to record in his indiscreet, irresistibly vivid diaries of these encounters, he was to learn the arts of a chameleon, to be "a mirror of other people's moods, opinions and prejudices". His diary is itself a precious portrait of an almost vanished society.

The houses he entered were often not as they are today; their owners were beset with dry rot, debt, death duties and, in wartime, the graffiti carved by troops billeted in the west wing. Paintings might be dirt-caked, plumbing dicey, walls running with damp. It was not just tact but a real empathy with their struggles that enabled him to win their trust, for the Trust. In the same spirit, he opposed the "museumisation" of these houses, seeking "to preserve their character unimpaired". Lees-Milne did more; he preserved an essential part of the character of this land. This was a very English kind of miracle, of improvisation allied to knowledge and persistence; no legacy is finer than that of this most civilised of Englishmen.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Belief in the NHS — with a proviso

From Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

Sir, Professors Alberti and Lessof of the Royal College of Physicians (letter, December 26) paint too bleak a picture of the difficulties the NHS faces in meeting increased patient expectation.

Of course, the NHS has a real challenge on its hands as every new medical invention comes on stream. But its record in almost 50 years has been one of outstanding success in accommodating the impact of advancing medical technology.

It is certainly true that some new treatments involve expensive care of patients whose conditions were previously untreatable. But other medical advances have allowed us simultaneously to improve the quality and contain resource pressures. New drugs can be expensive, but have the potential to reduce the need for hospital admission.

The fact is that over the years the NHS has used technology to upgrade its treatment, raise throughputs, lower unit costs and still hardly increase its spending as a proportion of national output.

There is every reason to suppose that the NHS can continue to provide a broadly comprehensive health service, provided that the wide range of variation in managerial and clinical performance between different parts of the NHS can be ironed out. The Government's recent White Paper (report, December 10; letters, December 16) offers some exciting new ideas for achieving this.

The crucial leadership role of the medical Royal Colleges in bringing the worst performers up to the level of the best would be of enormous help.

Yours sincerely,
PHILIP A. HUNT
(Director, National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts, 1990-97), House of Lords, December 27.

From Professor P. G. Drazin

Sir, The Cambridge bursars' fear (report, December 22) that the loss of the special capitalisation fees paid by the Government to their colleges will alter the power structure in Oxford and Cambridge has been the hope of some, both outside and inside those universities, for over a century.

Some feel that the quality of Cambridge is due not to the college or tutorial system but to the concentration of excellent staff and students as a consequence of a great tradition and a huge endowment (much more, it may be surmised, than the figures which the bursars were obliged to publish recently, because out-of-date valuations of property by friendly valuers may be far below market prices).

Transference of power from the colleges to the universities would help to speed changes at Cambridge, expedite decisions, support research, update teaching and avoid multiplication of administration and resources. It would also encourage able young scholars to devote their careers to scholarship, and to leave college offices, sports facilities, gardens, kitchens and cellars to others.

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT H. TAYLOR,
Vice-Chancellor,
The University of Buckingham,
Buckingham MK18 1EC, December 22.

From Dr Christina Laine

Sir, Is it not interesting that Mr Ray Kingdon voted "yes" to a Welsh assembly for exactly the same reason that many of us in North Wales voted "no"?

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTINE LAINE,
Springfield,
Marlford, Wrexham LL12 8TF, December 23.

From Dr John Turford

Sir, I trust that under the Scotland Bill the Scots are to pay for the entire cost of their new parliament building.

Sixty-five million pounds for St Andrew's House, or even £50 million for a new-build site (News in brief, December 24) seems an awful lot of money for a glorified parish council. I hope they think it's worth it.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN TURFORD,
6 Radbrook Road,
Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 9BA, December 24.

From Mr John Lawlor

Sir, Mr Robin Bury (letter, December 23) disapproves of President McAleese taking Communion in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, from a priest of the Church of Ireland. I doubt whether his disapproval is at all representative of how we as a Church reacted.

In a recent opinion poll among the general population of the Republic, a very high percentage of those interviewed supported the President's generous gesture. Among members of the Church of Ireland there would be very few who would not have been touched by such a brave and truly bridge-building action. In fact most of us can not see what the fuss is about.

I would guess that most members of the Church of Ireland, and a large number of Roman Catholics in the Republic, would hold similar beliefs about the nature of the Eucharist to those attributed to Queen Elizabeth I: "Twas God the word that spake it. He took the bread and brake it; And what the word did make it, That I believe, and take it.

Yours sincerely,
MIKE LAWLOW,
31 Carysfort Hall,
Carysfort Avenue,
Blackrock, Co Dublin, December 27.

From Dr Max Prola

Sir, Peter Barnard, reviewing (December 19) a Channel 4 documentary in which the symptoms of a patient suffering from ME subsided after a course of alternative medicine, concludes that "if something works then it must be a legitimate treatment, even if nobody can properly explain why the treatment works".

Therein lies the source of much of the erroneously placed faith in alternative medicine. The amelioration of symptoms following some kind of treatment does not constitute proof of the treatment's efficacy, not until the possible role of other influences has been ruled out. Ninety per cent of people suffering from headaches would report a cure the following morning if they were to sing a chorus of *Onward Christian Soldiers* before bedtime.

We can conclude that a treatment "works" only after the effects of variables such as the self-limiting nature of many illnesses, placebo response, informal assessment, etc, have been carefully controlled.

Yours sincerely,
MAX PROLA,
The Croft,
Ditchfield Lane, High Legh,
Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 0QN, December 19.

From Dr A. R. A. Hobson, FBA

Sir, The urge to apologise for events in the historical past is one of the more interesting aspects of modern British culture. The pilgrimage to Jerusalem to apologise for the First Crusade (letter, December 18) is a recent example.

Is this impulse purely British, or will it spread to the Continent? May we expect a delegation of Italians to apologise for Julius Caesar's invasion; or, for that matter, of Turks anxious to apologise for invading the Byzantine Empire and winning the Battle of Manzikert, thus provoking the Crusades in the first place?

That the flourishing of the local community is ultimately down to individuals, who may have to make sacrifices to achieve it, is something that today's promoters of grand schemes of communarianism would do well to remember – here, as well as in the United States.

That the honour to be Sir, your obedient servant,
ANTHONY HOBSON,
The Glebe House, Whitsbury,
Fordingbridge, Hampshire SP6 3QW, December 22.

From Dr David Brewer

Sir, It is interesting to have Michael Gove's alternative reading of *It's a Wonderful Life* (December 27) but I'm afraid his interpretation is lost.

One of the great strengths of American society, which warms the heart of a visitor, is the value placed on the local community, and the message of Frank Capra's film is that this has to be fostered, if necessary at the expense of profit, by individuals. This message was particularly appropriate in 1946, when the United States found itself both incomparably rich in resources and opportunities and freed from the constraints of war.

That the flourishing of the local community is ultimately down to individuals, who may have to make sacrifices to achieve it, is something that today's promoters of grand schemes of communarianism would do well to remember – here, as well as in the United States.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID BREWER,
32 Nightingale Road,
Hampton, Middlesex TW12 3HX, December 27.

From Mr John F. Martin

Sir, Any of your readers who have grown especially fond of their 1997 calendar may like to know that they can put them away until 2003, when they will be completely accurate apart from the year number. I shall be putting my 1975 calendar (also used in 1986) into extended hibernation until then. Leap years account for the variations in the lengths of these gaps.

For 1998, a calendar for 1987 will suffice.

Yours truly,
JOHN F. MARTIN,
57 Tynehurst Hill,
Loughton, Essex IG10 1BZ, December 29.

From Mr David Green

Sir, There's no need to ban human reproduction (letter, December 29). By the time our children have repaid the cost of their education and pre-paid the cost of their pensions it will be too late for them to find the money to rear children.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID GREEN,

Rhyd yr Hardig, Castle Morris,
Nr Haverfordwest SA62 5EJ, December 29.

e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

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Call for a start on Severn Barrage

From the Chairman of the Energy Board, Institution of Civil Engineers

Sir, In the wake of the recent Kyoto conference on climate change may I reinforce the call by Professor Ian Fells (letter, December 4) for the building of the Severn Barrage. Completion of this project would provide the UK with pollution-free electricity throughout the next century and beyond, reducing its annual emissions of carbon dioxide by 3 per cent.

With reasonable maintenance the barrage would last indefinitely and its energy source will be virtually unaffected by climate change. It would provide predictable, virtually inflation-proof electricity at a cost of less than 0.5p/kWh following amortisation of the construction debt, compared with a current average "pool" price of some 2.6p/kWh. During its construction, it would provide some 200,000 man-years of employment, much of it away from the barrage site in the manufacturing regions of the UK.

A start on the barrage now, funded through the Private Finance Initiative, would enable substantial completion by 2010. This would meet the Government's objectives of reduced carbon dioxide emissions and greater reliance on renewable energy and sustainable development.

Yours etc,
STEVE TAYLOR,
Chairman, Energy Board,
The Institution of Civil Engineers, One Great George Street, SW1P 3AA, December 29.

Cars for cities

From Mr Kenneth Peter

Sir, In 1964 Ernest Marples, then Minister of Transport, appointed "Harold Cox of Metal Box" (later, Lord Kings Norton) to chair a study of the design of vehicles for use in towns. The resultant *Cars for Cities* report was made to Barbara Castle in 1967 but was overshadowed by Labour's attempt to formulate an integrated transport policy.

The study went far beyond mere car design to explore many aspects of urban road transport, from vehicle size and use to pollution and safety. Promoters of very small car designs of the "elk-challenged" kind, such as the new Mercedes (report, November 13), could have saved themselves vast wasted investment had they but read the section on personal transport.

Perhaps Lord Kings Norton's death and your obituary (December 22) will, 30 years on, prompt the present generation of transport policymakers, vehicle manufacturers and traffic engineers to get hold of a copy of his report and re-read it.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
K. PETER
(Administrative Secretary, *Cars for Cities* Study, 1964-67, Westgate Cottage, High Street, Thornham, Hunstanton PE36 6LX, December 22).

Social whirl

SOCIAL NEWS

The Marquess of Hertford

The funeral service for the 8th Marquess will take place at the Parish Church of St Nicholas, Alcester, on Thursday, January 8, at 11.30am, followed by private burial.

Birthdays today

Mr A.M. Alton, former chairman, UKAEA, 73; Mr Gordon Banks, footballer, 60; Professor Sir Roy Caine, FRS, surgeon, 67; Mr Gervase Tallan Davies, Controller, BBC Wales, 54; Mr Be Diddley, guitarist and singer, 69; General Sir David Fraser, 77; the Hon Sir Archibald Hamilton, MP, 86; Sir John Houghton, FRS, former chief executive, Meteorological Office, 66; Lord Howick of Glendale, 60; Professor Dame Rosalind Hurley, microbiologist, 68; Mr Timothy Mo, writer, 47; the Right Rev Peter Norr, Bishop of Norwich, 64; Lady Oppenheimer, theologian, 71; Mrs Gwen Randall, Head, Framlington College, 47; Professor Michael Redhead, FBA, former Vice-President, Wolfson College, Cambridge, 68; Sir Albert Robinson, company director, 82; Professor A.H.R. Rowe, former Dean of Dental Schools, United Medical and Dental Schools of Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals, 72; Professor Robert Shackleton, FRS, geologist, 88; the Duke of Somerset, 45; Lord Terrington, 82; Sir David Willcocks, former Director, Royal College of Music, 78; Mr Clifford Williams, theatrical director, 71.

University news

UMIST UMIST has awarded the following Honorary Degrees: DSc: Mr John Monks, General Secretary of the TUC; Dr James Grigor, former Chairman of the Central Manchester Development Corporation. DEng: Sir Alan Cockshaw, Chairman AMEC. MSc: Mr David Atack, portrait painter.

Church news

Appointments

The Rev Peter Taylor, Incumbent, Necton, Holme Hale w North Pickenham and South Pickenham (Norwich); to be also Honorary Canon of Norwich Cathedral.

The Rev Mark Vayro, Team Vicar, Duxton Team Ministry (Ely); to be Priest-in-Charge, Friday Bridge (same diocese).

The Rev David Wallace, NSM, Haddenham w Cuddington, Kingsley and Aston Sandford (Oxford); to be NSM, Worminghall St Peter and St Paul w Oxford, Osney and Shabbington (same diocese).

The Rev Gordon Warren, Curate, Laleham All Saints (London); to be Rector, Limehouse St Anne (same Diocese).

The Rev Michael Withers, NSM, Bleachley St Mary (Oxford); to be NSM, Ellesborough, the Kimbles and Stoke Mandeville (same diocese).

Retirements and resignations

The Rev John Aisbitt, Vicar, Horbury w Horbury Bridge (Wakefield) retired October 31.

The Rev Michael Atkinson, Vicar, Great and Little Bardfield w The Saltings (Chelmsford) to retire December 31.

Canon Christopher Barber, Tewin St John w Tilney All Saints and Tilney St Lawrence (Ely) to retire January 31, 1998.

Canon Derek Buxton, Vicar, Woodhouse St Mary in the Elms and Woodhouse Eaves (Leicester) to retire April 30, 1998.

The Rev Adrian Jones, Rector, Worlingham w Barnby and North Cove (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to retire April 30, 1998.

The Rev Antony Lovewell, Industrial Chaplain, Devonport Dockyard (Exeter) to retire December 31.

The Rev Ann MacKeith, Family Life Officer, and representative of FLAME (Durham) to retire December 31 on health grounds.

Canon Clifford Norris, Vicar, Avelyst St Michael and Purfleet St Stephen (Chelmsford) to retire January 31, 1998.

The Rev Stanley Price, Vicar, Ipswich with Berkhamsted and Oneence w Bradnop (Lichfield) to resign December 31.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Otto Kotzebue, navigator, Tallinn, Estonia, 1787; Rudyard Kipling, poet and novelist, Nobel laureate 1907, Bombay, 1865; Stephen Leacock, humourous writer and economist, Swanmore, Hampshire, 1869; Sir Carol Reed, film director, Putney, 1906.

DEATHS: Jean Baxt van Heimont, chemist, Vilvoorde, near Brussels, 1644; Robert Boyle, chemist and physicist, London, 1691; John Needham, priest and man of science, Brussels, 1781; Sir William White Baker, explorer in Africa, Newton Abbot, Devon, 1893; Amelia Bloomer, campaigner for women's rights, 1894; Rufus Isaacs, 1st Marquess of Reading, Lord Chief Justice, 1922.

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PEARL ANNIVERSARIES

BIRTHS: On December 19th at The Portland Hospital, to Christopher and Maxine, a son, Alexander.

DEATHS: On December 14th to Robert and Esther (Gifford) a son, Alexander.

ANNIVERSARIES: On December 14th to Christopher and Maxine, a son, Alexander.

MEMORIAL: On December 14th to Christopher and Maxine, a son, Alexander.

WEDDINGS: On December 14th to Christopher and Maxine, a son, Alexander.

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OBITUARIES

JAMES LEES-MILNE

James Lees-Milne, FRSL, FSA, conservationist, architectural historian and diarist, died on December 28 aged 89. He was born on August 6, 1908.

By making a success of a National Trust initiative in the 1930s and 1940s, James Lees-Milne's tact did much to save the English stately home. His subsequent lack of tact in publishing his eyewitness account of the period caused embarrassment, but also won him a reputation as one of the great diarists of the mid century.

In 1936 the National Trust formed its country houses committee, and Lees-Milne was sent as an ambassador to owners struggling with death duties and high maintenance costs, to persuade them that the trust could be their saviour. He visited hundreds of properties, evaluating the invaluable taking notes, suggesting what might be done and calming the nerves of broken down aristocrats. He was closely involved in the preservation of such buildings as West Wycombe Park and Peover House, Nostell Priory and Feversham Hall, Cliveden, Knole and Polesden Lacey, as well as repositories of literary history such as Kipling's Bateman's and Shaw's Corner at Ayot St Lawrence. Even where the properties were not saved, his notes form a valuable record.

His four volumes of diaries from during and shortly after the Second World War are a mischievous mix of architecture and anecdote, irony and indiscretion. Buildings are described in succinct vignettes. Dinton House is "splendidly proportioned, clean-lined and precise . . . springing straight out of the rough grass"; Pixton Park is "large, shabby, chaotic and comfortable"; whereas Wood House is "a hideous, pretentious, genteel, over-restricted fake just like its inhabitants".

His mother, as he described her, was a chaotic woman, with an "utter indifference to proprieties which never failed to stimulate me". The only snag in his happy filial relationship, he later wrote, "was that I knew myself to be a disappointment to her. I simply could not respond to her rapidly shifting ambitions that I should become, when I grew up, a balloonist, an explorer of Malaysian jungles or the Antarctic . . . Master of Fox Hounds or a submarine diver." In short, as he put it, "I was a silly child . . . consistent in my longing to become Rouge Dragon Pursuivant".

This ambition enraged his fox-hunting father, George Crompton Lees-Milne, "a good, honourable man" who was loved by his friends, respected by his servants and liked (curiously enough) by other people's children. Father and son were water and oil. "Art was anathema to him," Lees-Milne later wrote, "I detested decadence, disloyalty to the Crown, and unnatural vice." And the paternal contempt for intellectuals was profound. "Books of course were taboo." But as Lees-Milne grew up he became increasingly bold and provocative. "By parading an assumed dilettantism and aestheticism, I glorified in taunting my wretched father."

The boy was sent to board at a private school at the age of eight, and from there he went to Eton. "I was by orthodox school standards a failure, by Eton ones a 'scus'. I excelled in nothing." But Eton awakened a love of literature and the arts. He spent his last term discussing books with Mr Bendix, the librarian, listening to Tom Milford play Bach, and sculling in a "whiff" up the Thames to Queen's Eynot, where he got drunk in the long grass on the riverbank.

Leaving Eton in 1926 he was reunited with his fiery father, who exhorted in reminding him that "all boys who were

and Savile Row tailors, civilised club behaviour and country house weekends.

Lees-Milne did not write them with any intention to publish, so when the first volume appeared in 1975, some of the subjects were distressed and angry. Lees-Milne showed a certain naivety about this. Exquisitely mannered, he had not intended to offend. Censorious reviewers branded him a snob, assiduous cultivator of Nicolson, Pope-Hemessys, Sackville-West and Mitfords. But Lees-Milne outlived the charge. "I am acutely conscious of and amused by class distinctions," he wrote in the autobiography of his early life, *Another Self* (1970). "I love them and hope they endure forever."

Yet James Lees-Milne did not himself have blue blood. He came of yeoman stock. The Lees side of the family, he would explain, were upgraded to "gentlemen" in the mid 18th century. The Milne side were in the cotton trade. By the time James was born, the family was established in a Worcestershire manor house and possessed of a respectably ample estate. He always loved the county where he grew up, and as the Birmingham suburbs scabbed its rolling pastures, he complained so vociferously that his friend John Betjeman dubbed him "the Worcestershire Grumbler".

His mother, as he described her, was a chaotic woman, with an "utter indifference to proprieties which never failed to stimulate me". The only snag in his happy filial relationship, he later wrote, "was that I knew myself to be a disappointment to her. I simply could not respond to her rapidly shifting ambitions that I should become, when I grew up, a balloonist, an explorer of Malaysian jungles or the Antarctic . . . Master of Fox Hounds or a submarine diver." In short, as he put it, "I was a silly child . . . consistent in my longing to become Rouge Dragon Pursuivant".

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Leaving Eton in 1926 he was reunited with his fiery father, who exhorted in reminding him that "all boys who were



good for anything knew, long before leaving school, whether they wanted to go into the Army, Navy, Foreign Office for this career I was too stupid, Civil Service or just business". His father would not contemplate his going to university, not least because he himself had run up unpaid debts at Trinity, Cambridge, and "he had heard that there were three niggers at Balliol". Furthermore, the General Strike had convinced him that revolution was imminent. His family had to prepare to face the enemy and were made ready to defend the village only when armed with a sword-smash.

The irresolute James found himself deposited instead at Miss Blakeney's Stenography School for Young Ladies in Chelsea where – to the incredulity of the proprietress and other pupils – he did a year's typing and shorthand, course. It was only after this that he was allowed to go up to Magdalen College in 1931. For three years he was private secretary to Lord Lloyd of Dolobran, former Governor of Bombay, and then in 1935 he became secretary to the irascible chairman of Reuters, Sir Roderick Jones. But Lees-Milne's dreamy temperament was hopelessly unsuited for "the slick

purposes of news scooping" and a year later, on the advice of Stanley Baldwin (who befriended him during a country house weekend), he resigned.

In 1936 the very job for him came into being. The National Trust, which had been formed to preserve precious landscapes, launched a scheme to save some of the historic houses of England. It needed a secretary and Vita Sackville-West recommended Lees-Milne. His father considered it a tragic manifestation of socialism that the public should be allowed to tramp around other people's houses, but Lees-Milne had found his vocation. Apart from a year in the Irish Guards during the war before he was invalided out as an epileptic, he was to spend the next three decades combing the country on borrowed bicycles and in temperamental motor cars and dilatory trains, searching out buildings worthy of preservation.

In 1942 he began his shorthand diary. It was originally intended for his own practical use, but became a uniquely full record of an English way of life that vanished in the wake of the war. When *Antennal Voices* was published, 30 years on,

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Lees-Milne's own voice could be heard clearly from what was already another era. Further instalments – *Prophecy Peace* (1947), *Caves of Ice* (1953) and *Midway on the Waves* (1955) – were read avidly by a public fascinated by the country houses to which Lees-Milne and the National Trust had given them access.

In 1951 Lees-Milne became adviser on historic buildings to the National Trust, a position he was to hold until his retirement in 1966. In 1957 he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, in recognition of a stream of books that began in the 1940s. These included *The Age of Adam* (1947) and *The National Trust Guide to Buildings* (1948), studies of Baroque architecture in Italy, Spain and Portugal, *The Shell Guide to Worcestershire* (1964), *English Country Houses: Baroque 1685-1714* (1970), and biographies of William Beckford, Harold Nicolson, the 2nd Viscount Esher and the 6th Duke of Devonshire. In 1996 he produced a fond, witty series of portraits of *Fourteen Friends*. Two further volumes of diaries appeared in the 1990s (and one is forthcoming), but these were something of a disappointment.

As a nervous and socially attentive young man living in London in the 1920s – "the last carefree social decade which Western civilisation has thoroughly enjoyed" – Lees-Milne had been too shy and nervous to take full advantage of the swinging fun. Yet as he wrote in *Another Self*, he was always and repeatedly falling in love. "It did not seem to me to matter whether with woman or man, provided the one was womanly and the other manly." It was in November 1942 that he first mentioned in his diaries Mrs Anthony Chaplin, wife of the future 3rd Viscount Chaplin, though her presence was overshadowed for him on that occasion by the Princesse de Polignac. By the late 1940s, however, Mrs Chaplin – now referred to simply as Alvilde – was appearing with increasing regularity. He accompanied her and her husband on a visit to Rome in 1949, and soon found himself swept up into the "absurdities of love". She and her husband divorced amicably, and Lees-Milne married her in 1951. She later made a reputation as a garden designer.

Yet despite the impression of diligent socialising that his diaries give, Lees-Milne enjoyed an increasingly reclusive life. In old age, Chatsworth was almost the only house that could still tempt him to stay away from his own enchanting 17th-century stone house close to the gates of Badminton Park. He commuted daily to Bath, where he worked, writing his books in William Beckford's library in Lansdown Crescent. At home in Gloucestershire he became accustomed to out-facing the wrath of "the master", the former Duke of Beaufort. "What's the point of the Lees-Milne?" the Duke would roar. "They don't hunt. They don't shoot. What use are they?" Well, the aristocracy habitually fail to recognise their greatest allies. Posterity will judge by more lasting lights.

James Lees-Milne's wife died in 1994. There were no children.

SIR PETER HUNT

Sir Peter Hunt, chairman and managing director of Land Securities, died on December 8 after heart surgery, aged 64. He was born on July 4, 1933.

WHEN Lord Samuel died ten years ago, City analysts thought that his company, Land Securities, would find it

almost impossible to replace him. But Harold Samuel, doyen of the property developers who had turned Land Securities from a small firm owning three houses into the biggest commercial property group in Britain, had already made careful plans for the succession. Into the chairman's office

stepped his protégé, Peter Hunt, who proceeded to guide the group from strength to strength. He continued the conservative strategy of his mentor: long-term investment in wholly owned, preferably freehold, properties, let to tenants such as Esso, Mobl, the Home Office and New Scotland Yard, in some of the

prime locations in the country. But he adapted this strategy to suit changing times, shifting the balance from office space to the retail, trade – including retail warehouses out of town. Under his stewardship, Land Securities prudently avoided the over-expansion of the late 1980s, making sure that all its buildings

were let first. It thus not only escaped the crash which was to follow, but was in a strong position to buy when prices fell.

On taking over as chairman, Hunt was castigated by one institutional investor for his firm's failure to join the prevailing stampede for big speculative developments in the City. Within 48 hours – as Hunt was happy to recall – came the stock market crash on Black Monday.

Peter John Hunt came from a slightly unusual background, in that he was the son of a Professor of French at Royal Holloway College in London University. Evacuated to the United States during the war, he returned to continue his education at Bedford School. From there he went to the College of Estate Management where he took a BSc degree. He also qualified as a chartered surveyor before being commissioned into the Royal Engineers during National Service.

Hunt spent the first four years of his career with a firm of estate agents, Borrett & Borrett, moving to the Chamberlain Group of commercial developers in 1960. Four years later he switched again, this time to Land Securities' subsidiary Ransfent.

His potential soon caught



the attention of Harold Samuel. Several years later Samuel moved him into the group's Piccadilly headquarters as assistant to the chief surveyor, following the takeover of City Centre Properties. In 1973 he made Hunt chief surveyor – his right-hand man – and two years later he took him on to

the board. Hunt became managing director in 1978.

Hunt served on a number of public and professional bodies, including the Covent Garden Market Authority. He served as president of the British Property Federation, 1990-91, and was a trustee of the Architecture Foundation. He was also chairman for the Central London Housing Trust, a charity that provides sheltered housing for old people. His alma mater, the College of Estate Management, made him an honorary fellow and in 1995 he was knighted for his services to the property industry.

A heavily-built man, he played rugby in his younger days and followed it closely throughout his life. In later years, however, he liked to relax on the Thames in his motor-cruiser. Immensely hard-working and at one time smoking 60 cigarettes a day, he was known for his enormous zest for life and sense of fun. He liked to think of himself as being "tough but fair", and was always quick to praise subordinates who did well. Few property developers have won as much respect for their integrity.

His first marriage was dissolved, but he is survived by his second wife Anne, and by a son from his first marriage.

cleverly adapted to the small stage of the Everyman Theatre. Mr. Martin Shaw's music is lively, but hardly seems to interfere with the delightfully inconsequential happenings on the stage. The dancing, too, may well seem to sophisticated eyes to be rather gentle, although at the close of the entertainment the dance of the bulldogs proved to be diverting enough. Still, there is not a great deal of cause for complaint. The children at yesterday afternoon's performance certainly found none. They clearly adored the hero of the hour ... The glory was Brer Rabbit's. Miss Nedine March scoured and frolicked with delicacy, and captivated all the younger folk and some of the elder with an inexhaustible variety of mischievous smiles. Mr. Alexander Field and Mr. Thomas Wiegand supported her skilfully and with enormous zest; Miss Oriel Ross pleased with her pretty voice; and the Mr. Man of Mr. Raymond Massey and the Miss Janey of Miss Miriam Adams (both coal-black of visage) afforded some delicious mirth.

PERSONAL COLUMN

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THE TIMES TODAY

TUESDAY DECEMBER 30 1997

NEWS

Patten eyes London mayor's job

Chris Patten admitted publicly last night that he might like to become the elected mayor of London "if the job was right". But in an interview with *The Times* the last Governor of Hong Kong said that if it was just a matter of choosing someone to be a transmission mechanism for decisions taken by Gordon Brown or John Prescott, "it is going to be difficult to find politicians and non-politicians from the left, right and centre of real class who would want to do it". **Pages 1, 2**

Murder prompts Maze security review

The Northern Ireland office sought to restore confidence in security at the Maze by appointing General Sir David Ramsbotham, the chief inspector of prisons for England and Wales, to inspect the jail after the murder of the loyalist leader Billy Wright, known as King Rat. **Page 1**

Journalist arrested

Dawn Alford, the *Daily Mirror* journalist who trapped a senior minister's son into selling drugs, was arrested for possession of the cannabis she allegedly bought from him. **Pages 1, 14**

Mother found

A woman who abandoned her two-month-old son at a council office has been found wandering the streets of Totnes in a confused state. She is unlikely to be reunited with him soon. **Page 1**

Dome goes missing

An official website features a graphic of the UK with a regional breakdown of how much is being spent by the Millennium Commission. But the Greenwich dome is missing. **Page 2**

Blame for suicide

The family of a man who committed suicide after shooting his psychologically disturbed son said that lack of professional help had led to the tragedy. **Page 4**

Unkind cut

A lifelong horticulturist has been fined £400, with £100 costs, for pruning a sycamore tree in her garden without getting planning permission. **Page 4**

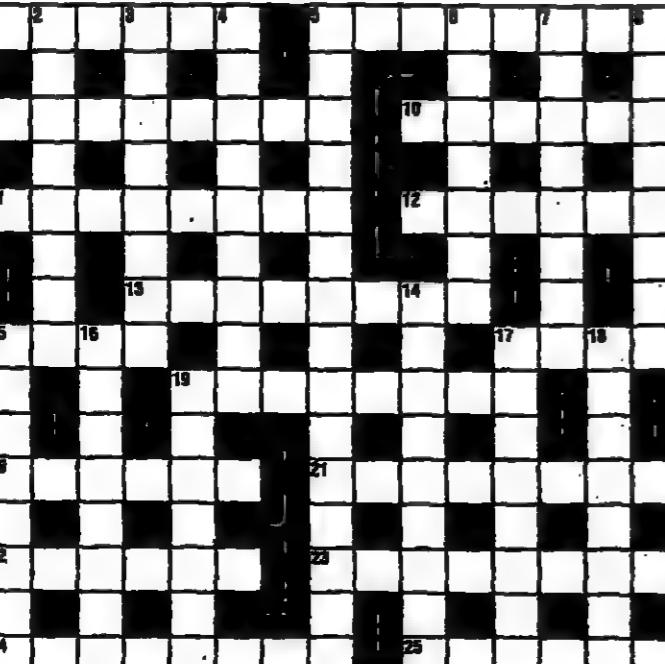
Lawsuit over baby

The family of a woman whose baby died after being born at home threatened legal action against the hospital which they say turned her away. **Page 5**

Blairs take a tropical break

Tony Blair has taken his family to the Seychelles for a week's holiday. They have rented a lodge in the grounds of an old plantation house owned by President René, which was the setting for the erotic film *Goodbye Emmanuelle*. If the sun shines temperatures should reach 30C (86F), but the islands have their heaviest rainfall at this time of year. **Pages 1, 3**

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,675

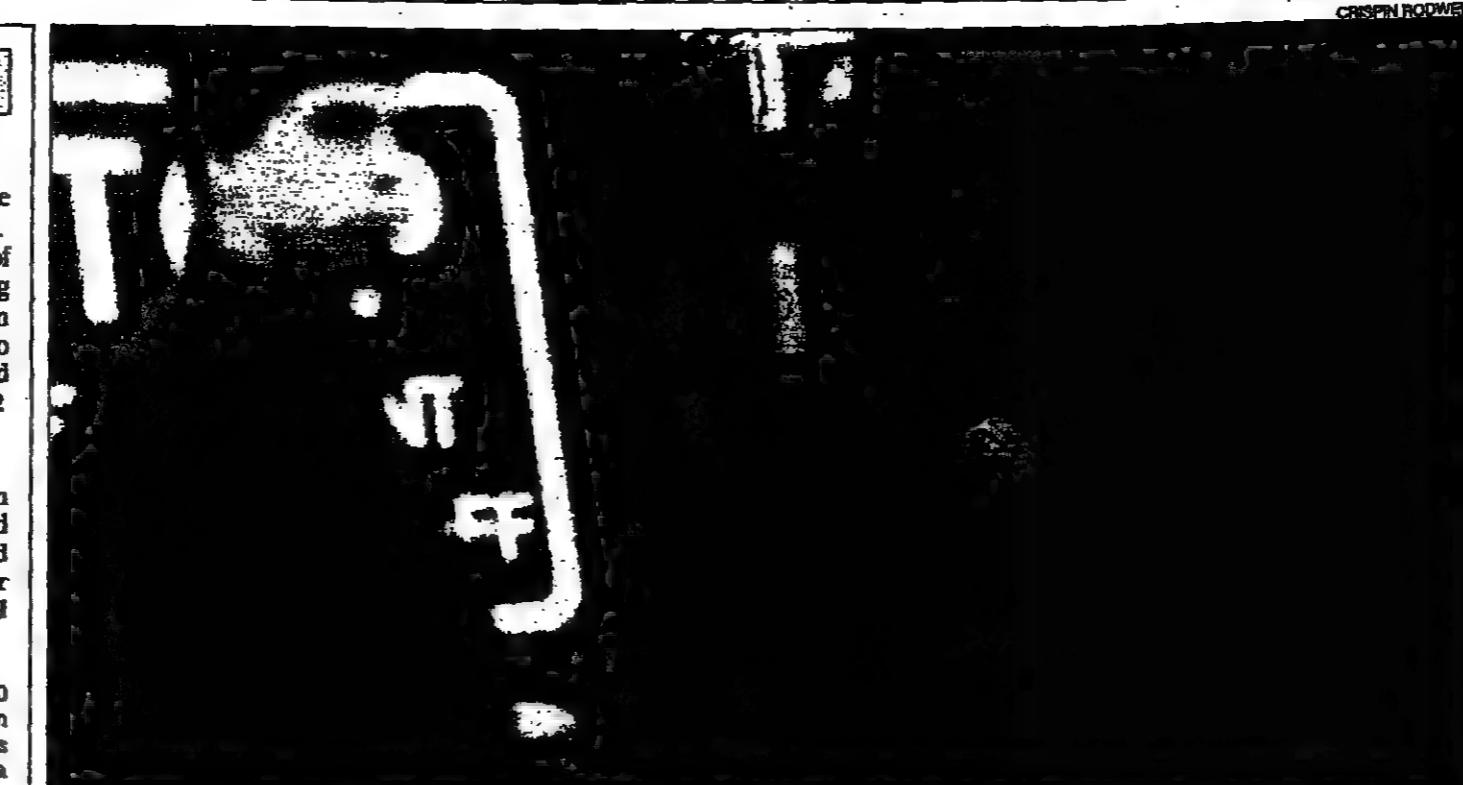


ACROSS

- 1 Fifty cent cut is a big lump (6).
- 5 Bishop, for one, requiring church to get manse renovated (8).
- 9 Beach jumper (4,4).
- 10 Gun shot, hitting two targets in succession (6).
- 11 This type of grass plagues late batsmen (4,4).
- 12 Playing football, the means that justifies the ends? (4,2).
- 13 Searching check in drug trial (4,4).
- 15 Avidly disapprove of king who has bad manners? (4).
- 17 Plays part or play parts (4).
- 19 Pot in danger about first of April? August, actually (8).
- 20 Abused lady in ancient language (6).
- 21 R. Crusoe, wrecked, needs energy and initiative (8).
- 22 Small, nasty, tailless beetle (6).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,674

SPRINGLOTTIS SAGO
E E R H A H L
ENTRACTE LEFWAY
P M H R O L S
PURSUE MINDLESS
S S A F
CHIC TOLLBRIDGE
E R A
TRESPASSER HEEN
I D O A
CAROUSEL HUNDRED
Y M D O S I A
BEHAVE MUTINOUS
H R E G C G N
STAY PENNYWORTH



Paratroopers patrolling the perimeter of the Maze prison in Belfast yesterday after Saturday's murder of the loyalist Billy Wright

Korea crisis

British banks met in London to consider their response as part of a global campaign to safeguard the stability of the international financial system. **Page 19**

Stamp: The City's appetite for new flotation has fallen dramatically, with the value of all this year's stock market debuts expected to drop by two thirds. **Page 19**

Retail: Christmas was late this year according to Goldsmiths, the jewellers and Littlewoods, the store and catalogue group. Both issued trading statements. **Page 19**

Markets: The FTSE 100 index rose 98.5 points to close at 512.4. Sterling's trade-weighted index rose from 104.8 to 105.6 after a rise from \$1.6692 to \$1.6746 and from DM2.958 to DM2.9883. **Page 22**

Kenyan poll problems

Kenya's general elections have been plagued by floods, violence, arrests and accusations of vote-rigging and misdirection of ballot papers. **Page 8, 14**

Short warning

The pilot of the United Airlines jumbo which flew into turbulence and dropped, killing one passenger and injuring 110, had only seconds of warning. **Page 10**

Fowl slaughter

Hong Kong began slaughtering all its 1.3 million chickens, ducks, geese, caged pigeons, quail and other edible fowl in an attempt to eliminate avian flu. **Page 11**

World City Weather

UK Weather: All regions 0336 444 910

Inside 0203 0336 441 410

UK Roads - All regions 0336 401 766

UK Rail 0336 401 747

UK Airports 0336 401 710

Planning in Northern Ireland 0336 407 504

Weather by Fax 0336 407 504

UK Weather 0336 401 766

0 day forecast 0336 401 2136

by Phone 0336 401 0333

Met Office 0336 401 0333

World City Weather 0336 401 0333

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The British pub is at the heart of a retailing revolution
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LAW

Highs and lows of the legal year, by David Pannick
PAGE 30



SPORT

Irwin prepares to tackle United's latest challenge
PAGES 31-36

TELEVISION
AND
RADIO
PAGES
34, 35

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

TUESDAY DECEMBER 30 1997



Barry Gibson said that consumers were now shopping even later in the run-up to Christmas while the catalogues division gave Littlewoods a boost

Littlewoods fails to lift spirits in high street

BY FRASER NELSON

LITTLEWOODS yesterday became the first leading retailer to confirm that the peak Christmas shopping season fell well below expectations.

The privately owned company said sales in its department stores were 7 per cent lower in the nine weeks to December 21. A last-minute spurt appears to have eased the pain, with sales down just 1 per cent in the final three weeks.

The company, one of Britain's biggest retailers, played down the setback, claiming like-for-like sales were up about 5 per cent after adjusting for discontinued product lines such as wines and spirits and children's clothing.

Barry Gibson, chief executive, said: "Our results seem to reflect a mood by the consumer to shop over later. The last three or four weeks were very strong and took us off by surprise, as we are very happy. We pursued full-price sales, and didn't start discounting until after Christmas — and we have been able to make margin increases as a result."

Littlewoods has long been regarded as the high street's sleeping giant, having underperformed many of its rivals for several years. Efforts have recently been made to revitalise the chain, with a new manager

ment at the helm, and its latest figures may reflect a degree of recovery against the background of generally subdued retail demand this Christmas.

Robert Miller, director of retail research at Kleinwort Benson, said it was still too soon to pass judgment on Christmas sales. "It is a mixed picture," he said. "They [Littlewoods] had a good, late Christmas in home shopping. It was always their plan to protect gross margin, so the sales figures are not that surprising." Clive Vaughan, an analyst at Ver-

street Christmas sales, but added weight to reports of a substantial rush in the three days before Christmas.

Robert Miller, director of retail research at Kleinwort Benson, said it was still too soon to pass judgment on Christmas sales. "It is a mixed picture," he said. "They [Littlewoods] had a good, late Christmas in home shopping. It was always their plan to protect gross margin, so the sales figures are not that surprising." Clive Vaughan, an analyst at Ver-

dict, the research house, said: "When the dust has settled, there will almost certainly be like-for-like growth for the retailers. They were expecting a great boom and bonanza but what they have got was quite an ordinary good Christmas." Other leading retailers are not expected to publish trading statements until early in the new year.

Goldschmidt, the jewellery chain founded by Jurek Pleszki, played down fears of a high street slowdown. It said

its 130 shops had seen overall sales increase 14 per cent in December, and a 7.9 per cent increase on a like-for-like basis. Shares of Goldschmidt added 12.5p to 27.5p.

Money circulation figures from the Bank of England added to the evidence suggesting a late spending spree in the three shopping days before Christmas. The Bank said that bank withdrawals were up 12.6 per cent in the last week of Christmas — double the increase a month earlier.

Littlewoods' results were keenly awaited as the first solid indicator of the Christmas season. Fears of a high street meltdown had been heightened by Knickerbox, the lingerie chain, which fell into administration last week. It blamed "appalling" high street sales before Christmas.

Barclays Bank has added its voice to the growing number of financial institutions sceptical about a retail stamp. It said sales through its Barclaycard had risen 8 per cent in the last weekend of Christmas, excluding the three shopping days that Littlewoods credited with providing much of its sales growth.

Commentary, page 21
Tempus, page 22

Big Apple has rotten time

US RETAILERS also complain that Christmas sales were worse than expected despite low unemployment and continuing strong economic growth (Oliver August writes from New York).

Analysts predict several chains are ripe for bankruptcy after the failure of Nobody Beats The Wiz, an electronics group. Christmas sales had been expected to grow by 4.5 per cent, but early estimates point to growth of about 3 per cent. Retailers started to discount goods before Christmas. Even large department stores such as Macy's were forced to cut prices by up to 50 per cent in the third week of December.

For the past two years, sales growth in the Christmas period has hovered around 3 per cent. In the preceding three years, growth reached between 7 and 8 per cent. The

Christmas period usually accounts for 25 per cent of US retailers' annual sales.

Rosalind Wells, an economist at the National Retail Foundation, said: "It doesn't look like it's going to be a barnburner, which is disappointing because the economy is so good."

None of the large retail chains has made any trading statements so far. But Sears said the post-Christmas period would be vitally important to this year's sales performance.

A number of US chains are fighting for survival. Nobody Beats The Wiz, a stereo and video retailer, suffered from a margin squeeze and is now looking to be acquired. Other troubled chains include Caldor and Bradloos. Retail analysts are predicting that the shakeout expected in 1997 will now take place in 1998.

Value of flotation slumps as buyouts break record

BY MARTIN WALLER

THE City's appetite for new company floatations has slumped dramatically, with the value of all this year's stock market debonairies expected to fall by two-thirds since the figures for 1997 have been totted up. But by contrast the buyout business is booming and set to reach a record high.

A study by KPMG Corporate Finance shows that institutional investors are shunning smaller companies, with the value of all those businesses coming to market falling from £10.1 billion in 1996 to just £3.5 billion this year, excluding demergerisations.

But the Centre for Management

Buyout Research says the total value of UK buyouts and buy-ins will break the £10 billion barrier this year, £2.6 billion higher than in 1996, which was itself a record.

Neil Austin, head of new issues at KPMG Corporate Finance, said institutions had huge cash flows to invest but were unwilling to pick through new issues in search of value. Bigger stocks outperformed their smaller brethren this year, leading institutions to focus their investment policy on larger companies. Meanwhile the consolidation taking place among fund managers meant there were fewer buyers.

Tempus, page 22

Balance shifts at Lloyd's as 2,000 names resign

BY JON ASHWORTH

MORE than 2,000 names are resigning from the Lloyd's insurance market, tipping the scales in favour of corporate capital members for the first time.

Corporate members, admitted for the first time just three years ago, will speak for £6 billion of capacity at Lloyd's in 1998, compared with £4.5 billion in 1997. Their share of capacity rises from 44 per cent to 59 per cent. Lloyd's will be able to underwrite £10.13 billion in potential insurance claims next year, slightly down on £10.3 billion in 1997.

Just over 2,000 names — individuals who use their wealth to back under-

writing at Lloyd's — are to cease underwriting with effect from December 31. About 6,000 names will continue to underwrite on an unlimited liability basis in 1998, supplying £4.03 billion of capacity. Numbers peaked at 32,000 worldwide in 1988, before a string of disasters prompted a run of crippling insurance claims.

About 1,105 names will continue underwriting for 1998 on a limited liability basis. Sir David Rowland, the departing chairman of Lloyd's, is among those to have taken advantage of conversion vehicles allowing them to limit their losses.

Max Taylor takes office as chairman of Lloyd's on Friday.

ROGER DAVIES, who stepped down in April as chairman of Going Places, the travel agency arm of Airtours, was given a £1 million bonus earlier this year under a shadow share option scheme.

Mr Davies, who remains a non-executive director of Airtours, received total remuneration in 1997 of £1.19 million, compared with just £290,000 in 1996. The £1 million bonus was paid out under the terms of a previous long-term

option scheme based on the company's share performance.

Since the travel industry's *austrous* horrifies in 1995, when overcapacity led to severe discounting, shares in Airtours have soared from less than 40p to £12.10, at yesterday's close. Earlier this month, the group unveiled a 39 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £120 million, and reported that bookings for next summer were running 15 per cent of a year ago.

The group's performance triggered maximum bonuses for the entire Airtours board. David Crossland, chairman, saw his pay rise from £580,000 to £666,000, including £244,000 in bonuses, while Harry Coe, who recently moved from finance director to managing director, saw his package rise from £459,000 to £562,000. Total emoluments for the board, including non-executive directors, rose from £2.69 million to £4.05 million.

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Saving for pensions 'too low'

By CAROLINE MERRELL

LANE Clark & Peacock, the leading firm of actuaries, claims that employees need to save nearly a quarter of their salary in a pension to have an adequate retirement.

Bob Scott, a partner at the company, said: "While the Government claims to be committed to encouraging personal investment in long-term pensions provision, the rhetoric is not matched by their policies, which are now actively discouraging individuals from saving adequate sums for their retirement."

According to Lane Clark & Peacock, an individual with national average earnings of £21,000 a year would 'hope' to retire on half income and a lump sum of 1.5 times final earnings. A final pension fund of £240,000 would be needed whereas five years ago it would have been £180,000.

The actuary claims that a typical individual would have to save 24 per cent of salary each year to reach the £240,000 target. The proportion that needs to be saved is more than the Inland Revenue target.

TOURIST RATES

| | Bank | Bank | Bank | |
|------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Buys | Sells | Buys | |
| Australia \$ | 2.65 | 2.47 | | |
| Austria Sch | 0.166 | 0.164 | 0.164 | 0.165 |
| Belgium Fr | 0.64 | 0.62 | 0.64 | 0.62 |
| Canada \$ | 1.250 | 1.245 | 1.250 | 1.245 |
| Cyprus Cyp | 0.919 | 0.947 | 0.919 | 0.947 |
| Denmark Kr | 11.47 | 11.08 | 11.47 | 11.08 |
| Finland Fr | 0.938 | 0.938 | 0.938 | 0.938 |
| France Fr | 10.45 | 10.28 | 10.45 | 10.28 |
| Germany Dm | 3.18 | 3.01 | 3.18 | 3.01 |
| Hong Kong \$ | 12.72 | 12.50 | 12.72 | 12.50 |
| Iceland Is | 1.25 | 1.19 | 1.25 | 1.19 |
| Ireland P | 1.21 | 1.12 | 1.21 | 1.12 |
| Italy Lira | 5109 | 5072 | 5109 | 5072 |
| Japan Yen | 225.23 | 214.70 | 225.23 | 214.70 |
| Malta | 0.867 | 0.828 | 0.867 | 0.828 |
| Malta Gld | 0.862 | 0.827 | 0.862 | 0.827 |
| New Zealand \$ | 1.21 | 1.27 | 1.21 | 1.27 |
| Norway Kr | 12.85 | 11.08 | 12.85 | 11.08 |
| Portugal Esc | 37.25 | 35.80 | 37.25 | 35.80 |
| Spain Pes | 284.59 | 285.50 | 284.59 | 285.50 |
| Sweden Kr | 13.92 | 12.68 | 13.92 | 12.68 |
| Switzerland Fr | 2.27 | 2.27 | 2.27 | 2.27 |
| United Kingdom £ | 20.60 | 20.60 | 20.60 | 20.60 |
| USA \$ | 1.779 | 1.808 | 1.779 | 1.808 |

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Corporate failures drop to lowest level for seven years

By RICHARD MILES

BUSINESS failures have fallen to their lowest level for seven years, according to the annual insolvency survey by Dun & Bradstreet, the financial information company.

The number of UK businesses going to the wall fell nearly 5,000 during 1997 to 36,368. Dun & Bradstreet said the annual tally was now close to pre-recession levels.

This year's 15 per cent fall in the business failure rate is the biggest since 1994, when the number of insolvencies

declined by 22 per cent, and the second-biggest this decade. Philip Mellor, senior analyst at Dun & Bradstreet, attributed the decline in business failures to the steady growth in the British economy coupled with tougher restrictions on borrowing imposed by banks.

Mr Mellor said: "Provided there is no substantial downturn in the economy, the country's annual tally of business casualties will be back to pre-recessionary levels by the millennium."

He added that the fall-off in

exports remained a concern, in spite of the fact that it had been partially offset by a surge in domestic demand. The financial crisis in South-East Asia could also add to the woes of British companies in some sectors.

Large companies fared much better than their smaller peers, with the number in big corporate liquidations — down 15.9 per cent to 15,470 — twice that of small firms, among which bankruptcies fell 7.9 per cent to 20,896.

Although every region of the UK experienced a fall in

business failures, some areas of the country saw sharper drops than others. The steepest drop in the casualty rate occurred in the East Midlands, down by 18.9 per cent, followed by the East (16.6 per cent) and the South West (15.8 per cent).

By contrast, the West Midlands and Scotland saw only marginal falls in the number of bankruptcies, slipping just 0.7 per cent and 1 per cent respectively. Indeed, the rate of bankruptcy among smaller firms in the West Midlands increased 8 per cent, com-

pared with an average national fall of 7.9 per cent. Mr Mellor said the rise in failures among the region's smaller enterprises could be blamed on the fall-off in exports. Suppliers of single components to larger companies had borne the brunt of the decline in international trade, he said.

The Dun & Bradstreet insolvency survey, compiled every year since 1980, is based on government records and other sources of business information. During this decade, business failures peaked at 62,767 in 1992.

Daimler sales rise 20% to exceed £40bn

By CHRIS AVRES

DAIMLER-BENZ, Germany's largest industrial group that includes Mercedes-Benz cars and Daimler-Benz Aerospace, yesterday said that sales in 1997 had risen almost 20 per cent to top £40 billion.

The healthy provisional sales figures came in spite of technical problems with Mercedes' small A Class car and its Smart car. The luxury car division suffered a public relations disaster earlier this year when the A Class was found to dip over in the so-called "moose test", where a driver swerves violently to avoid an animal in the road.

Jürgen Schrempp, Daimler's chairman, said: "We are more success-oriented than before and more efficient — a force to be reckoned with. This is clear from the figures and our rapid, customer-oriented responses to challenges such as the A Class and Smart." He said Mercedes, Daimler's largest division, had lifted sales in 1997 by 14 per cent to more than £17 billion. His statement came after Daimler denied reports

that further technical problems would also delay the launch of its top-of-the-range Mercedes S Class model. The car is expected to be on sale in October 1998.

Daimler said that all four of its divisions — passenger cars, commercial vehicles, aerospace and services — were profitable, and that operating profit in the second half of 1997 would be higher than the £610,000 earned in the first period. Precise figures will be released at the end of the first quarter of 1998.

Herr Schrempp said: "We started 1997 with the introduction of a new, more efficient company structure. We can now finish 1997 with dynamic growth, a motivated workforce and a significant improvement in profit."

Commercial vehicle sales

rose more than 20 per cent to £13 billion, ahead of expectations. Sales in Daimler's services division, Daimler-Benz InterServices, rose about 19 per cent to hit a record of more than £5 billion.



Jürgen Schrempp said Daimler was more efficient

Catastrophe cost falls 50% to £18bn

By A CORRESPONDENT

THE world suffered an unusually low number of natural disasters in 1997 but faces a sharply rising risk from global warming and weather disruptions, Munich Re, the world's largest reinsurer, said yesterday.

Munich Re's annual review of global disasters found only 530 "large loss events", well below the usual tally of between 800 and 900. However, Munich Re believes the long-term trend in catastrophes remains on the increase and disasters will become more frequent and more costly. Global warming, attributed to increased greenhouse gas emissions, and weather disruption will pose an ever greater threat, it says.

Most of the damage in 1997 was done by wind storms and floods. Munich Re said economic losses from such disasters came to \$30 billion (£18 billion) in 1997, half the previous year's total. But the human toll was more severe — about 13,000 people killed compared to 12,000 in 1996.

The international insurance industry paid out around \$4.5 billion as a result of natural disasters, down from about \$9 billion the previous year.

Dowding chief dies

DOWDING AND MILLS, the electrical and mechanical repair company, yesterday announced the death of Jim Cole, chairman and chief executive. Mr Cole, who had been with the company for 43 years, died suddenly on Boxing Day. The company said that Simon Sharp, a non-executive director, has been named acting chairman until a permanent appointment is made. The company said that Mr Cole had devoted his working life to Dowding & Mills and that he had made an immense contribution throughout his years of service.

Raymond wins at Tepnel

THE boardroom battle for control of Tepnel Life Sciences has been won by the faction led by Peter Raymond. At yesterday's annual meeting Stephen Minter, leader of a rebel board faction, was not re-elected as a director, and the resolution to remove Mr Raymond was defeated. Mr Raymond became chairman, replacing retiring chairman Kit Madden. Last week three potential directors nominated by the Minter faction withdrew their candidacies. Yesterday's statement said that Anthony Warburton, who backed the rebel Minter faction, will remain as finance director.

Tyco grows in US

TYCO INTERNATIONAL, seeking to expand its home security business in the North East of America, has signed an agreement to buy Holmes Protection Group for \$107 million cash. Tyco, a manufacturing and service company, said it will integrate Holmes, a New York maker and monitor of residential and commercial security systems, into its ADT Security Services division. Tyco, based in Bermuda, said that under the agreement it will begin a \$17-a-share tender offer for the 6.3 million outstanding shares of Holmes, which has 65,000 customers, mainly in the northeast US.

UniChem deal approved

THE merger of UniChem, the retail chemists group, and Alliance Santé, the European healthcare company, cleared its final hurdle yesterday after the plan was approved at a shareholders' extraordinary meeting. The marriage will create Europe's second-largest drugs wholesale and retailing company and value Alliance UniChem at £70 million. UniChem, which runs the Moss chemists chain, said the deal would give it access to the French, Italian and Spanish markets to buy continental products and to supply them to its UK customers.

Copper at four-year low

COPPER prices fell to their lowest for four years on the London Metal Exchange although traders said that business was dull with trade slow to develop immediately after the post-Christmas recess. The selling was attributed mostly to chart-based activity, after the long-holiday weekend. An increase in stocks of 2,100 tonnes did not help. Prices fell to \$1,720 (£1,010), down \$45 a tonne from the close on Christmas Eve. Copper's previous low of the year was \$1,740, achieved earlier this month, the lowest since January 1994.

Enviromed bid hopes

SHARES in Enviromed, the healthcare group, rose from 6p to 7p yesterday after the group said that it had been in talks during the past six months with a potential bidder. However, Enviromed added that although these discussions had ceased some months ago, the company "is not in a position to rule out the possibility of an offer in the future". It added that shareholders should note that the offer price previously discussed "would have been at a substantial discount to the current share price".

Broker's Indian venture

WILLIS CORROON, the insurance broker, has agreed to establish Willis Corroon Tower (Private) Ltd, which will operate as a reinsurance broker and consultant on insurance and risk management in India. Willis Corroon Tower, which will be based in Bombay, will be a joint venture between the group and Tower Insurance and Reinsurance Services with Willis having a substantial majority interest. The new company is expected to take over the reinsurance business of Tower and Willis in India before the end of March.

P&O Australia expands

P&O AUSTRALIA has bought three Queensland island resorts from Qantas for A\$25 million (£10 million). The 166-unit Bedarra island retreat, the 148-unit Dunk island resort and the 106-unit Brampton resort in the Whitsunday region. Richard Hein, P&O Australia managing director, said the company is very pleased with the purchase. He said: "We paid a fair price. We looked at it very early in the piece but the price at that time was a bit high." The acquisition will double P&O Australia's resort holdings.



A rise in sales is expected

Nationwide in 7% forecast for home prices

By SUSAN EMMETT

HOUSE prices will rise 7 per cent in 1998, with sales up a further 5 per cent, according to figures released by the Nationwide today.

The forecast by the country's largest building society highlights the slowdown in the housing market, which was brought on by the five interest rate rises since the general election in May.

Nationwide's figures show that house prices rose steadily throughout 1997 and property transactions increased by around 15 per cent.

But during the final three months of this year the price rise was less than 3 per cent compared with more than 15 per cent for the previous three months.

Figures for December show a 0.8 per cent rise compared with November.

But properties are now 12.6 per cent more expensive than a year ago with an average house costing £62,037 compared with £55,093 in December 1996.

Despite the slowdown, the Nationwide believes that there is still scope for further growth in the market as properties remain affordable and personal income continues to increase.

The Halifax, which has been consistently more guarded than Nationwide in its

predictions this year, expects house prices will increase by 5 per cent in 1998 and 4 per cent the following year, compared with 6 per cent in 1997.

In a report out today it says that a return to the "boom and bust" cycles of the 1970s and 1980s is unlikely as the housing market enjoys a period of sustainable growth which could well last into the next election in May.

Housing transactions are expected to stabilise at around 1.5 million a year.

Commentary, page 21

in the mutual interests of parties and respect their independence.

"They have decided to establish between them such relations as to end the differences that opposed them." Both sides are looking to overcome the limited expansion potential of the domestic French market. The French Government imposed strict limitations on the building of new hypermarkets as a way of protecting smaller, more traditional French shops and commercial life generally in French rural communities.

The bid has been raging since early September. Promodes and Casino said in a joint statement: "The companies Promodes on the one hand, Casino and Rallye on the other, are convinced that changes in the world of retailing necessitate co-operation accords when these are

rose 2.6 per cent to Fr 2,486 (£250), although both Casino and Rallye shares were suspended. Promodes said in November that it had abandoned part of its bid — for the Casino holding company Rallye — but was maintaining the offer for Casino itself.

Rallye, however, subsequently adopted the role of a white knight, exercising share warrants to fend off Promodes.

Antoine Gauthier, the head of a group of family shareholders in Casino, said that "a good agreement is better than a long dispute". He added that the agreement was in the interests of each party and was particularly beneficial for Casino, which would retain independence under the amicable takeover by Rallye.

Three-way battle for Singapore phone deal

A TAIKAN, a Singapore-based telephone company, has joined the bidding for the Singapore telephone system, which is currently controlled by a consortium of three companies.

The consortium, which includes the Singapore Telecommunications Ltd, the Singapore Electricity Board and the Singapore Power Corp, has been operating the system since 1993.

The new bid, which is expected to be completed by the end of the year, will be the third in a row for the system.

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STOCKMARKET

Stock Market Writer
of the Year

Index in festive spirit but turnover is exaggerated

INVESTORS yesterday enjoyed some of the seasonal festivity that has been lacking of late.

A near 100-point leap in the FTSE 100 index as more than 500 million shares changed hands is the stuff classic bull markets are made of. But just like the traditional pantomime, closer inspection reveals not everything is as it should be.

True, the index managed to close at its best of the day, of thereabouts, sporting a gain of 98.5 at 5,124. But the turnover level of 512 million shares was exaggerated by the pre-arranged buyback of British Gas "B" shares — all 237 million of them. BG closed a further 4.5p dearer at 281p.

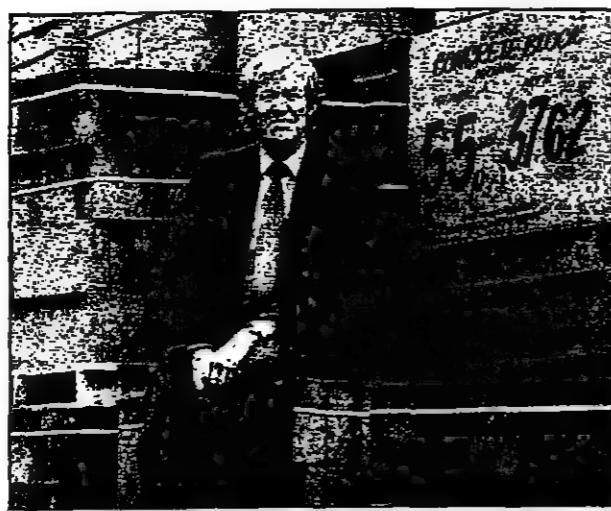
Add to this a put-through in five million British Steel shares at 128.5p — their closing price, up 2p — and the overall picture starts to look a little different with genuine turnover amounting to only 270 million shares. Much of yesterday's early pace was futures-led, sprinkled with the usual batch of new year share recommendations and takeovers.

Nevertheless, the absence of sellers yesterday and the opening 100-point plus rise on Wall Street means that brokers remain upbeat about prospects for the remainder of the year. They are talking it up to the 5,200 level by the year end.

Stock shortages provided double-digit rises among leading shares with Siebe the best performer among the top 100 with a leap of 80p, or 7.2 per cent, at £11.00. The buyers also came in for Unilever, up 25p to 510p, Marks & Spencer, 29p better at 610p, Renktol Initial, 13p to 267p, Tesco, 23p to 507p, and Carlton Communications, 20p to 470p.

There was further demand for the financials as the speculators tried to select the likely bid candidates for 1998. Top of the list is *Guardian Royal Exchange*, up 17p at 332p, followed by *Abbey National*, 39p better at £11.09, Northern Rock, 30p dearer at 588p, *Sun Life*, 29p higher at 445p, *Norwich Union*, 10p stronger at 390p, and *Bank of Scotland*, 20p dearer at 570p. *Lloyds TSB*, a likely predator, rose 22p to 770p.

Southern Electric, 11p better at 52p, continues to be viewed as a takeover target. A previous stamp by one of the power generators a few years



Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy saw Kingfisher increase 7p to 839p

back was blocked by the Government.

Kingfisher, whose chief executive is Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy, rose 7p to 839p on plans to create a further 1,500 jobs by opening six more B&Q Warehouse stores.

Enviroined touched 9p before ending the session 2p firmer at 8.5p after confirming it had been in takeover talks during the past six months.

The healthcare specialist said talks had now ended but it could not rule out the possibility of more approaches.

Another company in bid talks is *Independent Parts*, up 20p at 134.5p. The automotive parts specialist says any bid is likely to be priced at around 140p, giving the group a price tag of £33.4 million.

Matthew Clark, the drinks distributor, continued to feel

the ill-effects of its recent profits warning with the price hitting a new low of 157p before rallying to reduce the fall to just 3p at 163.5p. *Rival Merrydowns*, which sweetened its profits warning with news of a bid approach this month, was steady at 51.5p.

Last week's profits warning continued to weigh heavily with *ILP Group*, 10p lighter at 31.5p. The packaging group has seen its price fall from a peak of 78p to 31p.

Abacus Recruitment, the best-performing share of 1997, continued to leave the rest of the market in its wake with a leap of 67p to a new peak of 327p. The price has come up from a low of 84.5p this year.

By contrast the worst-performing share of the year was *BKG Resources*, which slipped 1p to a new low of 10.5p. That compares with its peak for the year of 237p.

Biocompatibles celebrated European regulatory approval for its coronary treatment with a jump of 30p to 450p.

There was some return to normality at *Danks Business Systems* as the price rallied 8p to 230p after briefly touching 247.5p.

Brokers say *Spargo Components*, the software specialist and servicing group, may be worth looking at in the new year. The price closed unchanged at 147.5p, way below its peak of 174.5p. The group should enjoy a boom on the back of the "millennium bug". *Spargo* made £1.2 million last year with £1.4 million expected this time round.

□ **GILT-EDGE:** Revived fears that interest rates could rise by a further half-point to 7.75 per cent in the new year took some of the burnish off the recent strong performance by the bond market.

The experts are claiming that the Bank of England may move again if post-Christmas sales in the shops prove stronger than expected.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt finished 11p lower at 1122 in thin trading in longs. Treasury 8 per cent 2021 formed a tick to 1222.5p, while among short-dated issues Treasury 7 per cent 2002 eased a tick to 1012.1p.

□ **NEW YORK:** Shares held sharp, early gains amid lessening investor jitter over South Korea's financial troubles. The Dow Jones industrial average was up 107.12 points to 7,786.43 at midday.

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New York (midday)

Dow Jones 7,786.43 (+107.12)

S&P Composite 1,065.22 (+13.01)

Tokyo Nikkei Average 1,675.22 (+47.38)

Hong Kong Hang Seng 10,620.00 (+16.05)

Amsterdam AEX Index 1,081.22 (+27.80)

Sydney ASX 250 2,576.53 (+21.48)

Frankfurt DAX 4,197.37 (+15.58)

Singapore S-Index 1,577.94 (-14.58)

Brussels General 1,205.83 (-22.82)

Paris CAC-40 2,934.46 (+48.17)

Zurich SCAI Gen 1,251.80 (+20.00)

London FT 30 3,270.42 (+51.48)

FTSE 100 4,124.42 (+98.62)

FTSE All-Share 4,077.02 (+97.47)

FTSE Non-Financial 3,045.13 (+41.48)

FTSE Financials 2,657.70 (+24.47)

FTSE 250 2,394.74 (+38.59)

FTSE Small Stocks 1,125.15 (+40.00)

FTSE Gilt Index 1,121.25 (+10.00)

FTSE 1000 1,400.00 (+10.00)

FTSE 2500 1,200.00 (+10.00)

FTSE 1000 Index 1,381.50 (+10.00)

FTSE 2500 Index 1,280.50 (+10.00)

FTSE 1000 (rebased) 1,381.50 (+10.00)

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FTSE All-Share Index 1,381.50 (+10.00)

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FTSE All-Share (rebased) 1,381.50 (+10.00)

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FTSE 2500 (rebased) 1,280.5



Pub parade: an O'Neill's outlet, left; Richard Peacock, Tim Martin, John Hutson of JD Wetherspoon, top; Guy Hands of Nomura, below left; lager boom; and entrepreneur Roger Myers



The time for navel-gazing is truly over

I have been a year most

marketers would rather forget. After endless conferences and seminars debating the role of marketing in the industry arrived at the most unsatisfactory conclusion: marketing is the understanding of the customers' needs. Not much change there. I hear you say. For an industry that prides itself on the ability to read its customers' minds it is singularly inept at self-analysis.

However, after years of getting bashed about in the boardroom the industry decided to take a good look in the mirror to see if it was in healthy enough shape to take on the challenges that lie ahead.

And, now that marketers understand who they are and what they are meant to be doing they are determined to ensure 1998 is the year in which they finally convince their paymasters of their true value. And, given the very nature of their job, marketers should be the most adept at promoting their own cause.

John Stubbs, chief executive of The Marketing Council, the industry think-tank, says the time has come for marketers to call a halt to the navel-gazing and start proving their worth.

Most marketers are sitting inside their marketing departments worrying about the acceptability of marketing," he says. "What

never those who contribute to the bottom line."

But he adds: "In order to gain their confidence we have to learn how to present our ideas to the board and back them up with numbers. Without that we don't have a great deal of credibility."

Yet, while marketers ponder their role, the business world around is changing at such a rapid pace that marketers are finding it harder to predict what their customers want and therefore plan ahead.

Aside from the usual suspects that appear on every marketers' worry list — media inflation, restrictive legislation, cost control — there are signs that a more disturbing trend is emerging: a genuine lack of control.

Bob Sinclair, marketing director of the Automobile Association, speaks for the majority of service-driven companies tempted by the attractions of diversification into new areas when he says: "There are so many distractions. We're trying to figure out ways in which we can retain the true loyalty of our customers. Do we do that by diversifying into new areas or do we stick to what we have always done before but only try to do it better. There is a danger of diversification just for the sake of it."

For Paul Wood, managing director of Spode, the bone china manufacturer, it is the ever-changing taste of the consumer that is forcing his company to move away from a mass-produced product to individual lines. Trying to predict

what consumers want and therefore what his retail customer will be demanding is becoming increasingly difficult. He says: "You have to latch on to the trends very fast. If you don't, you could be marketing at the wrong time."

Fear of the unknown can curtail the initial excitement that new opportunities such as technology and new media present to the marketing community.

Chris Turner, marketing director of the Discovery cable channel, views the advent of new cable channels with a healthy dose of circumspection not least because they present a threat to his company's position.

"I think the challenge to many marketers will be in trying to tackle new media and understanding what it means for their company. Does it mean further fragmentation of the consumer or does it in fact mean better segmentation?"

One thing is certain, however. Come midnight tomorrow the whoops of joy that greet the new year will also be there to wish good riddance to the old one.

JULIAN LEE

Dog & Duck heads for oblivion in an era of branded beer outlets

Dominic Walsh and Andrew Sangster on the entrepreneurs who are at the forefront of a £1.2bn pub retailing revolution

The pub industry is undergoing a dramatic transformation. On current industry estimates, next year the big operators will pour £1.5 billion into the pubs they run as they rush to exploit the returns available from converting traditional outlets into branded concepts.

The most visible of these new-look pubs have been the much-maligned ersatz Irish pubs. With the wave of a shamrock, the Dog and Duck is transformed into an O'Neill's, a Scruffy Murphy's or one of the myriad other copy-cat concepts. Bass has become the biggest Irish operator with its O'Neill's, rolled out in conjunction with its Caffrey's Irish beer, one of the most successful beer launches in recent years.

Next year's country of choice looks set to be Australia, with such monsters as Bar Oz due for wider exposure. Scottish & Newcastle, which is behind the Bar Oz concept, is hoping to tap into the resurgence of interest in the southern hemisphere expected to follow from the staging of the Olympics in Sydney in 2000. S&N is also hoping the spread of Australian pub brands will do for Foster's, the Australian beer it brews under licence, what Irish pubs have done for Caffrey's.

The interest in managed pubs is a by-product of the retailing revolution that has swept through the country's 70,000-plus licensed outlets. At the end of the last decade most brewers viewed pubs as just an outlet for beer. Pubs were seen in the boardrooms as a necessary evil in the more important game of slitting as many barrels as possible.

Today, however, all the big brewers have divided their operations into production and retailing divisions. Indeed some, such as Greene King, have opted out of brewing altogether, and there have been persistent whispers that Whitbread may follow suit.

It is widely held that this transformation was caused by government intervention.

The Monopolies and Mergers Commission report into the supply of beer in 1989 condemned the vertical integration in the industry, whereby most brewers also owned the outlets for their beer.

Lord Young of Graffham, then Secretary of State at the Department of Trade and Industry, acted on the MMC's findings by forcing the big brewers to free half of all their pubs above a 2,000 ceiling from the tie under which landlords were obliged to sell beer supplied by the parent.

Effectively, the brewers were forced to shed thousands of outlets in response to the Beer Orders from the DTI.

A raft of new companies sprang up to run the pubs that were being unloaded. These new kids on the block took a fresh look at the industry and, with no brewery to keep happy, launched into pub retailing. Several, such as Regent Inns and Grosvenor Inns, have subsequently floated on the stock market and have tended to command pretty healthy multiples.

But Tim Martin, the founder of JD Wetherspoon, one of the most successful pub chains, disputes this view of things. "The MMC was not the catalyst for change. What really mattered was that people were able to get new licences," he claims.

He has a point. Wetherspoon, except at the outset in the early 1990s, has never bought an existing pub, preferring to convert old car showrooms and schools into superpubs. "We started opening new pubs, which forced the industry to reinvent," says Martin. "All the MMC did

was reduce the number of big brewers from six to three."

In effect, the driver for change has been an increasing understanding of who is going to pub and what they want. The shrinking manual workforce of thirsty blue-collar males has seen beer volumes shrink dramatically during the 1990s, with the emphasis moving from ales to lagers.

A new market was needed and so the industry turned its attention to women and families, with food rather than beer becoming the focus for most of the new pubs. At Wetherspoon about a third of the takings in its new outlets are food. In 1990, just 4 per cent of the chain's turnover was food.

Many of the brewers realised that the new climate required skills they did not possess. Bass, for example, turned in 1994 to outside

consultant Amanda Wilcott to help develop the All Bar One concept, which looks nothing like a conventional pub.

The shrinking manual workforce of thirsty blue-collar males has seen beer volumes shrink dramatically during the 1990s, with the emphasis moving from ales to lagers.

Yates Brothers Wine Lodges, a century-old company that has transformed itself into one of the managed pub pioneers. Yates, under Wilcott's supervision, will open the first Ha! Ha! Bar & Canteen in Bristol in February, which will be followed later in the year by two sites in London. Open-plan kitchens visible to the customer, plus the sale of a range of own-branded goods such as mustards and oils, will be the key features of the new chain. "The industry has a lot to learn. We are still building pubs without air-conditioning and yet every car my friends buy has air-conditioning," she explains.

The next generation of pubgoers will be even more demanding, she believes, as they have grown up in an environment where eating out has become the norm rather than the exception. Whether male

or female, the future customer will not accept the smoky, claustrophobic atmosphere of a traditional boozer.

Her latest venture is with Yates Brothers Wine Lodges, a century-old company that has transformed itself into one of the managed pub pioneers. Yates, under Wilcott's supervision, will open the first Ha! Ha! Bar & Canteen in Bristol in February, which will be followed later in the year by two sites in London. Open-plan kitchens visible to the customer, plus the sale of a range of own-branded goods such as mustards and oils, will be the key features of the new chain. "The industry has a lot to learn. We are still building pubs without air-conditioning and yet every car my friends buy has air-conditioning," she explains.

While the revolution in pubs is arguably good news for consumer choice, investors will be looking harder at whether an adequate return can be made on the money being ploughed in. To date the returns have been good, on the whole, with the best operators achieving at least 20 to 25 per cent. Bass estimates that its return on capital from converting an unbranded pub to an O'Neill's is more than 50 per cent on average.

But as more and more of the big companies' managed estates are converted to brands there is clearly the prospect of diminishing returns, and Whitbread is the most likely to suffer first. It has led the charge into pub retailing and more than half of its managed pubs are branded, a higher proportion than any of the other big players. Bass and S&N, on the other hand, are likely to benefit from being laggards in the rush to brand

ing. Less than a fifth of the Bass estate, and around a quarter of S&N's managed pubs are branded.

Inevitably, the massive sums being pumped into managed houses by the big brewers has put a question mark over the future of their slower-growing tenanted estates, particularly in the wake of the loosening of the beer tie in recent years. It was no surprise when Bass recently called time on the bulk of its tenanted pubs, selling more than 1,400 for £563.7 million.

The new owners are a financial consortium fronted by Hugh Osmond and Roger Myers, who made their names with PizzaExpress and Café Rouge respectively. Their view is that many of the disciplines and skills brought to bear on managed houses can be applied to tenancies without having to resort to the huge amounts of investment being thrown at managed-house operations.

Of even greater significance has been the appetite for tenancies shown by Nomura International, part of the Japanese securities giant. Having bought 1,700 pubs from Innkeeper in 1995, Nomura, whose managing director is Guy Hands, forked out £1.2 billion in September for Innkeeper's remaining 4,300 pubs and was the underbidder for the Bass estate. It believes that tenanted operations are undermanaged assets that have been starved of investment. And yet, it argues, they provide a solid property play while producing strong cash flow, enabling it to parcel up the debt in the form of property-backed securities.

The jury is still out on whether Nomura has paid too much, but the fact remains that it is now Britain's biggest landlord — a by-product of the Beer Orders that Lord Young and the MMC can surely never have foreseen.



Lord Young's response forced big brewers to shed pubs

Ritz cracker

A TRICKY problem for Mohamed Al Fayed, 1998 is the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Ritz Hotel in Paris by Carl Ritz. His mission was "to offer guests all the refinements a prince would wish for in his own residence". The centenary would normally lead itself to an ostentatious publicity campaign — except that the Paris Ritz, following the tragic death of Diana, Princess of Wales, has had enough publicity for a while, some might think. The inquiries should be over by the late spring, so unleashing the inevitable legal actions. Boasting over the

comfort and splendid service on offer at the hotel might clash with some of the headlines this summer.

Alas, however busy it may be on the trading floor at Harrods, most of the rest of Al Fayed's organisation seems to have come down with the same mystery virus that has flooded 98 per cent of the working population this week. "We won't be making any comment until Monday," says one of the few survivors.

I HEAR that George Robertson, our tough-minded Scottish Defence Secretary, received a memo from one of his civil servants explaining the holiday arrangements for the red box this year. The pile of documents that ministers have to take home to work on the red box would be arriving on December 31, and its contents will need to be processed by January 2. The civil servant in question was swiftly put straight as to Robertson's own holiday arrangements this morning.

Bank error

ANY expert on advertising, if that is not an oxymoron, will tell you that "knocking copy", ads that attack the competition, can rebound badly — look at the bloody battle a few years



ago between rival lawnmowers makers. But the latest TV campaign from First Direct starting on New Year's Day looks suspiciously close to knocking copy, featuring Bob Mortimer, a comedian, attempting to make people pay for things they would normally do for free, such as wear a side-parting in their hair.

No, I didn't think it sounded very funny, either. But it is a direct attack on all those banks that charge for their services, and to make sure I do not miss the point, First Direct has spent its just how much most of them charge. Oddly enough, the only ones offering a free service are First Direct and Midland, which happens to be First Direct's parent. Can we look forward, therefore, to an all-out advertising war between the banks? "My

curious how few City folk have bothered to come into work this week, is it not? In any event clearance by the financial regulator, the Society of

Finance, is just days away.

Yesterday the signing of two more fund managers was announced. John Ions will be head of retail and Mikkel Bates in charge of unit trust services. Both, oddly enough, were poached from Aberdeen Prolific, Ions having been in charge of integrating the two businesses of Aberdeen Asset Management and Prolific since the merger was announced in July. They bring the number of fund managers to 11. I am told there will be more before the official launch on January 20.

MARTIN WALLER



Nicola Horlick awaits the regulator

From Mr David Lindsay

Sir, Gordon Brown was right not to rule out increasing national insurance contributions. "Brown stirs up talk of increase in national insurance", Weekend Money, December 20. It is not a tax, but a contribution out of earnings to a fund from which contributory benefits, such as the state pension, are paid. There is currently a top limit of annual earnings that bear this contribution, and clearly no Chancellor would have invented a "tax" solely for earned income, and only on a lower band of that income.

Obviously Mr Brown wants to keep open the possibility of improving contributory benefits.

Chief's candid quote

From Mr Roy Jenkinson

Sir, What does Mr Martin St Quinton, chief executive of Danks, think is up to claiming (Report, December 17) that unsatisfactory results are "our own fault. We've not made the right management decisions and we have not implemented them fast enough".

What about the strong pound, state intervention, the price of oil, trade unions, daft EU decisions, kids in red braces not knowing their aperitif from their elbow, shareholders, and so on?

I will not do for chief executives to admit publicly that they got it wrong. Mr St Quinton deserves to be thrown out of the club. Yours unbelievably,

ROY JENKINSON, 22 Grange Avenue, Exmouth, Devon.

Shares close at best of day

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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| High | Low | Company | Price | Vol | Chg | % Chg | PE |
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| 152 | 149 | ABN-AMRO | 117.5 | 27 | 17.1 | | |
| 153 | 149 | Barclays | 110.5 | 25 | 18.1 | | |
| 154 | 149 | BNP Paribas | 130.5 | 25 | 18.9 | | |
| 155 | 149 | Alfred Herd | 147.5 | 48 | 11.8 | | |
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ALL IN THE WRONG Paul Shelley rehearses the role of Sir John Redcliff in Arthur Murphy's excellent 18th-century romp. One of the theatre's happiest rediscoveries turns again for the Christmas season.

Orange Tree, Clarence Street, Richmond (0181 940 3633). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm; Weds Thurs Jan 8, 15, 2.30pm; Sat, 2.45pm. Extras matin tomorrow, Jan 2, 4pm. Closed Jan 1. [S]

ART Ron Cook, Nigel Havers and Malcolm Stoen in this exceptionally interesting drama about friendship, uncertainty and commitment and an almost all-white painting.

Wyndham's, Charing Cross Road, WC2 (0171 399 1736). Tues-Sat 8pm, matin Wed, 3pm. Extras matin tomorrow, Jan 2, 4pm. Closed Jan 1. [S]

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Disney's film turned into a hit Broadway musical. Julie Alsop, Brighton and Alessandro Boni in the cast, with support from the blues of David Gaffiths and Norman Rossington.

Dominion, Tottenham Court Road, W1 (0171 616 5011). Today, 2.30pm and 7.30pm; tomorrow, 2.30pm and 7.30pm; Jan 1, 2.30pm and 7.30pm; Jan 2, 3pm. Extras matin, 7.30pm, matin Sat, 2.30pm. [S]

BUSY MALONE The cast of the National Youth Music Theatre's first three-square-guns in the spot-gangster musical based on Alan Parker's movie. Jeremy Taylor directs. Queen's Hall, Queen's Walk, W1 (0171 394 5011). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, matin Wed, 3pm. Sat and Sun, 8pm. [S]

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CHICAGO Revised version of the celebrated Kander & Ebb musical, directed by Walter Bobbie. A Matin-Tony award for the best book last year. Starring Ruthe Henshall, Ute Lemper, Henry Goodman and Nigella Plaster.

Adelphi, Strand, London WC2 (0171 580 4000). Mon-Sat, 8pm, matin Wed, Sat, 2.30pm. [S]

CHRISTMAS WITH FLICKS Jeanne Clunie's impressive (and coupleless) musical tribute to the disco days of the 1970s. Her impersonation of Linda, the disco diva, is superb. King's Head, Upper Street, N1 (0171 226 1916). Tues-Thur, 8pm; Fri and Sat, 7pm and 9pm. Sun, 3.30pm, 6pm. [S]

DAVID COPPERFIELD Illustrations of the famous Dickens' novel, intriguing plot and a rich cast of eccentric characters. Dame Matthews plays Alice, and the Cratchit family. Stephen, in the title role, is a joy. Old Vic, Coventry Street, SE1 (0181 858 5500). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, matin Sat, 2.30pm. [S]

DEAUX BALEANCE Blythe Alix's heartwarming welcome review of Abey's play about marriage, parenthood and neighbourhood. Maggie Smith plays the drunk sailor.

THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London

■ House full, returns only
■ Some seats available
■ Seats at all prices

Anthony Page directs

Theatre Royal, Haymarket, SW1 (0171 320 6800). Mon-Sat, 8pm, matin Wed and Sat, 3pm. [S]

THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR

Jonathan Kent directs Tom Hollander as the presumed inspector, Brian Murphy as his servant and Letitia Dean as the domineering Mrs Sartorius.

Almeida Theatre, 108 Almeida Street, N1 (0171 359 4404). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; matin Sat, 3pm. Closed Jan 1. [S]

A GRAND NIGHT OUT: Wallace

and Gomer take to the stage at Christmas, pursued by a host of the people they have wronged and bent on revenge. Nick Park's characters put through their paces by the Thunderbirds FAB team.

Peacock Theatre, Portugal Street, off Coventry Street, WC2 (0171 404 5500). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; matin Saturdays and matin days, 3pm. [S]

AN IDEAL HUSBAND Return of Peter Hall's enjoyable production.

Summers of despotism. Stellan Skarsgård and Sophie Thompson as the couple.

Almeida Theatre, 108 Almeida Street, N1 (0171 359 4404). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; matin Sat, 3pm. Closed Jan 1. [S]

A LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Edward Fox and Clare Higgins play

Harold Macmillan and Lady Dorothy in Hugh Whittemore's play about the effects of the Prime Minister's resignation.

Compton Verney, Lower Street, SW1 (0171 368 1731). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm; matin Wed, 3pm and Sat, 7.45pm. In repertory. [S]

PETER PAN Ian McEwan plays

Hook and McDarling, with Daniel Evans as the boy who won't grow up and Alec McCowen as the Storyteller. In a new version by Trevor Nunn (who also directs) and John Caird.

Haymarket Theatre, Covent Garden, WC2 (0171 359 1739). Tues-Sat, 7.45pm; matin Wed and Sat, 3pm. In repertory. [S]

THE SLOW DRAG Jazz musical by

Carson Kreitzer, loosely based on the story of Billy Tipton, a woman who passed as a man to find work as a jazz musician. With Liza Sadavoy, Kim Cattrall, Chita Rivera, and others. Whitechapel Theatre, Whitechapel, SW1 (0171 359 1739). Tues-Sat, 9pm; matin Thur, 3pm and Sat, 4pm. [S]

LONG RUNNERS

■ Blood Brothers: Phoenix (0171 389 1733) ■ Buddy: Strand (0171 930 8800) ■ The Caretaker: Cambridge (0171 404 5500) ■ The Comedy of Errors: Cottesloe (0171 494 5065) ■ Miss Saigon: Drury Lane (0171 464 8400) ■ Oliver: Sadler's Wells (0171 404 5000) ■ Open Your Heart: (0171 494 5400) ■ Smokey Joe's Cafe: Prince of Wales (0171 839 5967) ■ Starlight Express: Apollo Victoria (0171 416 1116) ■ The Sound of Music: New Victoria in Brixton (0171 638 2228) [S]

Ticket information supplied by Society of London Theatre.

CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and where indicated with the symbol (●) on release across the country

demanded to be a girl. Director, Alan Barker. ABC Shoreditch Centre (0171 429 4170)

PERSPECTIVE UNKNOWN (●) Joe Manganiello, Natascha Weth

watch their fingers stealing drug money. Director, Michael Winter, directed by George Hickenlooper. Metro (0171 437 0757)

PRINCE VALIANT (PG) Sponsored

version of the story of King Arthur's

adventures. Stellan Skarsgård, Julia Roberts and Julia Murney. Director, John Huston. (0171 359 4214) [S]

HOME ALONE 3 (PG) Another

Christmasy, weird kid turns to light

intruders. Unapologetically sequel with a different type. Alesandro Di Lungi and a

rather edge Director, Ross Kassinger. (0171 359 4214) [S]

THE SILENT YEARS (PG) (●)

1940s. A quiet life, a quiet death.

But what about it? Hardly

but muddled drama, with David Thewlis, Director, John Schlesinger. Empire (0990 889900) [S]

THE TREASURE ISLAND (PG) Tom

Garrison straps himself into the

woods for Nell Bartlett's

adaptation of Stevenson's classic tale of pirates, cannibals and a

longing for freedom.

Lynne, King Street, W1 (0181 741 2911). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm (except tomorrow, 8pm); matin Wed and Sat, 2.30pm; matin Mon, 9pm, Fri and Sat, 7pm and 8.30pm. [S]

THE TANGO LESSON (PG) A film

about a man who wants to impress a woman, but ends up impressing her.

Directed by Michael Winter. (0171 437 0757) [S]

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Richard Cork views the two magnificent sculptures that once graced the entrance to London's famous insane asylum

And so to Bedlam, with compassion

When London's Bethlem Hospital was rebuilt in Moorgate during the 1670s, it boasted the grandeur of a palace. The first custom-designed British hospital for the insane, this resplendent showpiece was meant to impress. But the two colossal figures carved for the gate amounted to far more than extravagant ornamentation. They deserve to be ranked among the most outstanding sculpture ever produced in this country.

As the Museum of London's *Bedlam* exhibition reminds us, these monumental stone images left no one indifferent to their power. They quickly became the most celebrated works carved by Caius Gabriel Cibber, the Danish-born sculptor, already much admired for his allegorical bas-relief at the base of the Monument, near London Bridge. Both figures, reclining on carved replicas of straw matting, occupied prominent positions on the ends of a broken pediment above the gate's elaborate stone piers.

Cibber's figures were perched about 14 ft above the ground, but their ample dimensions and expressive force were never forgotten by those passing between the high walls. The carvings became synonymous in the public's mind not only with "Bedlam", but with the whole notion of madness itself. References to them abounded in the art and literature of the following century, most notably in Pope's description of "Great Cibber's brazen brainless brothers" from *The Dunciad*, and Hogarth's overt quotation in the Bedlam scene from *A Rake's Progress*. Here the deranged Rake adopts a pose frankly reminiscent of the statue on the right side of the hospital gate.

We do not know who was responsible for commissioning Cibber to tackle such an audacious subject. The carvings only came to be known as *Raving Madness* and *Melancholy Madness* in the early 19th century. But the prevailing mood of these two immense figures was clearly intended to be harrowing. They set out to represent the two principal categories of mental disorder identified by contemporary authorities, and their expressions differ accordingly.

Despite the obvious contrast between the two figures, they are united by a profound sense of pathos. The chained figure on the right, who is the more exasperated of the pair, opens his mouth to utter a cry. But the emotion he embodies is far closer to despair than anything more aggressive or terrifying. Cibber's terracotta model for the statue, revealing how carefully he related to the form of the broken pediment below, has an authenticity which must derive from studying inmates in the hospital. It is significant that *Raving Madness* supposedly originated in Cibber's first-hand observation of Oliver Cromwell's



"Although Cibber's *Raving Madness* raises his fettters, he makes no real attempt to wrench them off his wrists. He knows how firm his chains really are, and his cry is an acknowledgement of captivity"

porter, Daniel, who entered Bedlam as a patient in 1656. His face, commemorated in an engraving, bears a resemblance to the statue, and the terracotta model has a directness and vivacity that might well derive from life.

In the end Cibber decided, probably because the high position of the carving demanded it, to tilt the figure's left arm and push back his head to a more dramatic angle. This increase in outspoken feeling would have been conveyed to the viewer below with greater effectiveness. But Cibber stops short of resorting to melodramatic gestures. Although *Raving Madness* raises his fettters in the air, he makes no real attempt to wrench them off his wrists. He knows, all too well, how firm his chains really are, and the cry he utters is an acknowledgement of captivity.

Cibber's sympathy for victims of mental anguish becomes more clear in *Melancholy Madness*. Partially propping himself up on his matting, the unfortunate man stares out at a world he will never again be able to inhabit. Although the new Bethlem Hospital was dedicated to "the relief and cure of persons distressed", Cibber's doomed inmate appears irrecoverably

deranged. The extent of his predicament is conveyed, not through theatrical bluster, but by the lassitude afflicting his entire body. His legs bend abjectly as he realises that there is no point in raising himself above the bed. Here he reclines, massive in build and yet incapable of applying all that Caliban-like strength to any coherent purpose. His mighty sinews

have grown slack with disuse, rendered impotent by a mind that refuses to harness his physical potential any longer. All he can do is remain prone and abject.

Cibber's chisel has defined the forlorn face of a man divorced from any discerning awareness of the reality he was once able to identify. Worse still, his expression signifies utter emptiness, unrelieved even by a flicker of sentient recognition or the will to recover sanity.

These remarkable carvings offered a corrective to the callous view of madness that made casual visitors throng the wards inside Bedlam. The frisson of parading through its

interior was regarded as an entertainment, like going to the zoo. Hogarth included a couple of idle society ladies smirking in his Bedlam scene from *A Rake's Progress*.

The presence of such voyeurs was bound to heighten the patients' unease. Most of them, after all, were incarcerated in spacious cells, easily viewable from the visitors'

corridor. One

journalist reported

in 1753 that the London crowd should no longer be allowed to turn its premises into a vulgar amusement.

Just over 20 years later,

conditions had improved so

much that a French observer

described how "the poor crea-

tures there are not chained up

in dark cellars, stretched on

dark cold paving stones ...

The doors are open, the rooms

wainscoted, and long airy

corridors give them a chance

of exercise. A cleanliness,

hardly conceivable unless

seen, reigns in this hospital."

When Wordsworth wrote

about his youthful London

period in Book VII of *The*

Prelude, he placed Cibber's

carvings among the greatest

wonders of the capital, worthy

to be ranked alongside "the

Tombs of Westminster", or

"the giddy top/And Whisper-

ing Gallery of St. Paul's".

had gone out of his way to avoid absurdity! Until the early 19th century, these carvings offered their onlookers a gravely compassionate vision of the alienation engendered by mental disorder.

The activities within

Bedlam eventually

began to conform to

the spirit in which

Cibber made the statues. By

1766 the hospital had

decided that the London

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Two years later, though, the

hospital's surveyor, Sydney

Smirke, dismissed them as

"the frightful figures". Smirke

soon put his disapproval into

action. In 1858 the statues were

taken to the Victoria and

Albert, and remained banished from the hospital for

more than a century.

Only now are they displayed

with fitting pride in the

Bethlem's own museum in

Monk's Orchard Road, Beckenham.

Disdain has given

way to admiration, and

Cibber's figures can once

again be seen as a brave,

haunting attempt to define the

unfathomable tragedy of fractured minds.

● **Bedlam: Custody, Care**

and Cure is at the Museum of London,

London Wall, EC2 (0171-600 3699)

until Mar 15

AROUND THE LONDON GALLERIES

EARLIER works by Mark Fairnington — technically expert copies of sections of 17th-century flower paintings laid

against a flat coloured ground

— make up a large proportion of his exhibition at the Todd Gallery. However, his most recent series shows enticing, light, dew-drenched visions of natural life. Among his close-ups of the natural world are a bug sitting on a much magnified berry and a hummingbird hovering beneath a flower. By

obviously avoiding any reference to photorealism, Fairnington aims to push his vision beyond the general to the particular. The Festival Hall's exhibition of photographs, *A Celebration of Independence*, provides a broad survey. Peace processions, flags, marching: this is an historical vision combined with contemporary artistic accounts and caught moments. Sanjeev Sath's view of a woman in a courtyard crosses straight documentation with collage effect. Henri Cartier Bresson's classical, dignified, hugely extended black and white photographs, *Muslim Women Praying at Dawn* (1948) or *Refugee Camp, Punjab* (1947), have figures extended across them as if in a freeze. From portraits such as that of the full-faced Maharaja of Baroda, through numerous religious ceremonies to a Republic Day Parade in 1966, Cartier Bresson provides a concentrated but perhaps familiar perspective. Dayanita Singh takes apparently straight collective portraits of upper-class families and Dario Mitidieri documents the extraordinary *Children's Parliament*, while, on the other hand, Daniel Salgado's overall design, an overview of a mass of canal

elements protrude from the wall. Scale seems everything and a great deal of surrounding space is necessary for the real fly's wings stuck on to a human tooth, the shrunken rabbit's head, or the cast of the very tip of a human tongue sticking out from the wall to have any presence at all. Unfortunately the strange twist of unpleasant finesse and real detail does not pay off. The taxidermist's trade mixes arbitrarily here with other elements to make a show that shifts uneasily between sculptural emptiness and suggestive intimacy.

Richard Salmon, 59 South

SACHA CRADDOCK

Royal Academy of Arts

Fitzroy Square, London W1. Tel 0171-580 8888

■ **PHOTOGRAPHS** in sup-

plements, television film foot-

age and a mass of fiction make

India seem familiar. It is often

difficult to concentrate, how-

ever, to stop flicking through

the pages or news slots and to

see past the general to the par-

icular. The Festival Hall's

exhibition of photographs, *A*

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Sadism, silly suits and Stockport County

A review
of the
best, the
worst and
the oddest
in the
courts
during the
past year



COUNSEL
DAVID
PANNICK QC

The past year boasts strong contenders for the awards of most optimistic submission by counsel, most ridiculous law suit, most injudicious judge and most unsatisfactory juror — among other hotly contested honours.

Optimistic submission of 1997 was made on behalf of Stockport County Football Club, which was appealing against an industrial tribunal decision that the club's manager had been unfairly dismissed. The finance director had told the manager to come to a meeting the following day at which the finance director would "tear up his contract and shove it up his arse". The employment appeal tribunal noted that "it is suggested on behalf of the club that this was a very proper invitation to a disciplinary committee at which these matters would be fairly heard". The club's appeal failed.

Stupid law suit of the year was the one brought by a supporter of Leicester City Football Club, who unsuccessfully claimed damages from the Football Association on the ground that the referee's decision to award a penalty against his team in an FA Cup match caused him such distress that he had to miss two days' work. Close behind was the claim for negligence (dismissed by the Court of Appeal) by the man who won the 30-metre race for fathers at his children's primary school sports day, beating Robbie Fowler, the footballer — then ran into a brick wall.

As always, there was strong competition for absurd lawsuit of the year in a foreign court. In Seanie, Norman Mayo, a self-proclaimed "milkaholic" who had suffered a stroke, claimed damages from milk companies on the ground that "milk is just as dangerous as tobacco" and so dairy products should carry warnings. A man from Cork failed to persuade the Irish High Court that the four candidates for the Irish presidency, all women, should be eliminated because the Constitution referred to the President as "he". Injudicious judge of the year was Joseph Troisi, who resigned from the bench in West Virginia after he took off his robes, stepped down from the bench and bit a defendant on the nose. In this country, less than a week after resigning from the circuit bench, Angus MacArthur was jailed for 28 days for his third drink-driving offence in 12 years. In dismissing an appeal by a defendant convicted of various offences of dishonesty, the Court of Appeal held that "the fact that a judge might have fallen asleep during



Clockwise from top left: Myra Hindley must stay in jail, Dame Shirley Porter has to pay £27 million, the Lord Chancellor compared himself with Cardinal Wolsey, another Kray went to jail, Carl Bridgewater's murder remains involved, Paula Jones can sue President Bill Clinton

part of the trial did not necessarily mean that prejudice had been caused to the appellant".

Unsatisfactory juror of the year was sitting at Luton Crown Court, where Judge Alan Wilkie, QC, had to order a retrial for a man accused of supplying crack cocaine because Shane Smyth told the defendant, from the jury box: "Why don't you plead guilty? You are *going* guilty." The Court of Appeal allowed an appeal by two jurors imprisoned by a Crown Court judge for contempt of court because they wrongly believed that they were refusing to give a verdict.

There was strong competition for witness of the year. Giving evidence during his libel action against *The Guardian* for alleging (among other

matters) that he supplied prostitutes to businessmen, Jonathan Aitken told of his horror at being asked by his son: "What's a pimp, Daddy?" Two weeks later, Mr Aitken abandoned his claim. Charlie Kray was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment after being convicted of offering to supply large quantities of cocaine, despite evidence from "Mad Frankie" Fraser that Kray "wouldn't say bon to a goose. He's a lovely man."

An English barrister, appearing as an expert witness for Countess Spencer in her effort to obtain more money than her husband was offering in their divorce proceedings, told a South African court: "I'm not an estate agent, but personally I think £300,000 would only get a house in a very

unattractive distant suburb of London with problems, perhaps, of crime."

In the year in which the new Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, criticised "fat cat lawyers", the award for unpleasant lawyers of the year was easily won by a firm of solicitors in Birmingham. After one of its lawyers hanged himself because of pressure of work, the firm sent his elderly mother a bill for more than £12,000 for the time spent dealing with his death (including a fee of £150 for telling her about the tragedy). The firm later waived the charges because of the adverse publicity. In civil cases, the Court of Appeal required the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority to reconsider whether Diane Blood

should be allowed to have a child using the sperm of her dead husband. The Court of Appeal also ruled that local authorities have a duty to house and feed impecunious applicants for asylum. The Divisional Court found Dame Shirley Porter, former leader of Westminster City Council, guilty of "wilful misconduct" in the "homes-for-votes" affair and upheld a £27 million surcharge by the District Auditor on her and her deputy.

Important criminal cases included the decision of the House of Lords that the Home Secretary should reconsider the tariff of 15 years which he had imposed on the 11-year-old boys convicted of murdering two-year-old James Bulger. In the Divisional Court, the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham of Cornhill, dismissed a challenge by the Moors murderer, Myra Hindley, to the decision by the Home Secretary that she should spend the whole of her life in prison as punishment for her crimes. The Court of Appeal allowed appeals by three men who had served 18 years in prison for the murder of Carl Bridgewater.

A number of barristers suffered unusual experiences in the course of duty during 1997. A hearing at Guildford Crown Court had to be stopped in the afternoon because both prosecution and defence counsel were taken ill after eating a curry in the canteen at lunchtime. Trials at York station were delayed when the wind scattered defence counsel's documents on to the track. At the Old Bailey, prosecuting counsel broke down while reading to the court an account of the defendant's systematic torture of a baby.

The High Court granted Sir Nicholas Lyell, Attorney-General, in the last Conservative Government, an injunction to stop another man from standing in his constituency at the general election under the same name. After being prosecuted for an alleged criminal offence, the fake Sir Nicholas adopted the name by deed poll because the Attorney-General "had taken my good name, so I took his". The European Court of Human Rights caused unease and pain about sodomy and incest by rejecting their complaint about their convictions for assault on consenting victims.

The United States Supreme Court ruled that Paula Jones could pursue her claim alleging that she had been sexually harassed in 1991 by Governor, now President, Bill Clinton. In Massachusetts, Judge Zobel reduced the murder conviction of the sex pair Louise Woodward to a conviction for manslaughter, and sentenced her to 279 days in jail, the time she had already served. An Italian court decided that a wife was not responsible for her marriage breakdown when she walked out because of her mother-in-law's interference.

In England, Lady Justice Butler-Sloss, allowing an appeal by a mother who had lost custody of her children because they had seen her and her fiancé naked, explained in the Court of Appeal that judges "can be disapproving but they must not allow themselves to be shocked". In 1998 there will be more for judges to disapprove of, and ample temptation for them to be shocked.

• The author is a practising barrister and a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.

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LEGAL APPOINTMENTS

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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PROPERTY FINANCE/PFI To £48,000

If you want to take your career as a property lawyer to the next level, this top 10 firm is the place to do it. The success of its practice is based on property work, making it the perfect home for ambitious property finance or PFI lawyers with 2-4 years' ppc. Finance lawyers need securitisation experience. Ref: T36118

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SEN CORP/CAPITAL MARKETS To £180,000

This is the big time for an experienced City lawyer looking for a move. The London office of this top 5 US firm is a major player, and dwarves most US firms' offices in terms of work and package on offer. It's keen on capital markets lawyers with 5+ years' ppc, or heavy-duty corporate lawyers. Ref: T39197

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This leading international firm offers an experienced EU lawyer an unparalleled opportunity to open its planned Brussels office. If you do not have a strong personal following, you will at least need to show good contacts to persuade the firm that you are capable of making this venture a success. Ref: T23899

PROPERTY To £50,000

On top of superb training and career development, there are real partnership opportunities if you prove yourself as a property lawyer at this top 10 City firm. You are guaranteed the highest quality work, regular pay reviews and a genuinely caring environment. If you have 0-4 years' ppc, Ref: T6594

CORPORATE To £60,000

This highly innovative and rapidly expanding West End practice services a very impressive range of clients that would make many larger firms jealous. As well as a spread of mainstream corporate work, you will enjoy life at a firm renowned for treating its staff well if you have 0-5 years' ppc. Ref: T25202

CONSTRUCTION To £35,000

The London office of this major international firm is the place to cut your teeth as a construction lawyer as it will immediately employ you on some of the biggest construction projects the country has ever seen. A position to build your skills and experience if you have 0-2 years' ppc. Ref: T19551

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If you move your career to this leading shipping firm, then the only way is up, either as a partner here or at another firm, as experience gained here will give you a very attractive prospect. Perfect for a shipping litigator with 0-3 years' ppc, later to work on bills of lading, international trade etc. Ref: T40383

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Big is not necessarily better, especially in a niche such as employment law. This exceptionally successful City firm has a reputation for employment that ranks it with the very best, and your career can only benefit by spending time here. If you can show 1-4 years' ppc, you could be set up for life. Ref: T25769

PARTNERS To £Senior equity

The may be one of the fastest growing firms in the country already, but it is not slowing down in its quest to become one of the leading firms as well. It will pay top notch salaries, real partnership prospects and the chance to work with some of the best names in the City. You will need 2-7 years' quality ppc in corporate, tax, pensions, banking, telecoms or EU law. Ref: T11371

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RUGBY UNION

Newcastle out to confirm lead status

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

NO ONE could reasonably faint the criticism by Rob Andrew, the Newcastle director of rugby and by half, that the fragmented season is a joke. While the stop-start nature of the league persists no side, not even the formidable one assembled by Andrew at Kingston Park, can get on anything like a roll.

Should Newcastle overcome Leicester in the Allied Dunbar Premiership at Welford Road tonight, it would be continuity of sorts after their comprehensive victory over Bristol on Saturday. And victory by the first division leaders over the third-placed team, allied to their win on the opening day at Bath, should convince those who doubt Newcastle's title credentials.

Leicester have already ended one unbeaten league record over the

Will Carling, the former England captain, has broken his right hand and could be out of action for four weeks. The injury completes a troubled spell for the Harlequins centre, who has been dropped and substituted this season. It was discovered after Carling was substituted during the win over London Irish on Saturday.

festive period. Their narrow win over Saracens at Vicarage Road on Boxing Day was costly in terms of injuries to Graham Rowntree and Leon Lloyd — Perry Freshwater enters the front row and Craig Joines is on the wing — and there is a doubt, too, about Eric Miller's fitness, although the absences hardly diminish the size of the task, according to Andrew.

"Leicester are the biggest test of our aspirations without question," Andrew said. "Agen [in the European Conference semi-finals] was our biggest test so far and we lost. Leicester will be a step up from that. We will have to rise to the occasion, but we've the players who can do that."

One of those is Tim Stimpson, the England and British Isles full

back, who could make his first league appearance since the defeat of Northampton in October. Stimpson's contractual wrangles are reportedly near resolution and he is expected to come off the transfer list. The future at Newcastle of a fellow Lion, John Bentley, although available for selection, remains less certain.

Andrew hopes to select two other England players, both recently injured: Gareth Archer and Tony Underwood, who scored a record four tries for Leicester in a 66-5 win when the sides last met in the league in March 1994. Since Leicester won at Kingston Park in the Pilkington Cup last season, Newcastle have forged a no-frills, efficient and, so far this season, unbeatable combination, in domestic competition.

The theory that Newcastle lack strength in depth has been proved unfounded by the effective stand-in parts played by Stuart Legg, Graham Childs and Richard Metcalfe.

Pat Lam has been the outstanding contributor, as an unstoppable link between forwards and backs, although it is time for his fellow Samoan, Va'aiga Tuigamala, to show himself as something more adaptable than a banting ram.

Saracens can resume the leadership if they beat London Irish and Newcastle lose. They rest Paddy Johns and Tony Copsey comes in at lock. Neither Sale, for whom Graham Daws, at 38, is expected to make his full league debut at hooker, nor Gloucester can afford another defeat.

As well as agreeing Steve Ojomoh's move to Gloucester, Bath who need to sustain their championship push from the lower half of the table at home to Northampton this afternoon, yesterday released Christian Tyrer, who signed from Widnes rugby league club 15 months ago.

Dan Lyle is expected to return to the Bath pack after missing the win at Sale last Saturday.

Jim Bramhall takes over from the injured Matt Dawson at scrum half for Northampton.



Dungey, the head coach of Tampa Bay, celebrates his team's wild-card victory against Detroit

Tampa revival put to the test

BY NICK SZCZEPANIK

THE National Football League (NFL) divisional play-off games next weekend will include a battle of the Bays, after the Tampa Bay Buccaneers managed their first post-season victory since 1979 on Sunday. Their 20-10 defeat of the Detroit Lions in the final wild-card play-off game earned a visit to the Super Bowl champions, Green Bay Packers.

The other game in the National Football Conference (NFC) will see the San Francisco 49ers entertain the Minnesota Vikings while, in the American Football Conference (AFC), New England Patriots visit Pittsburgh Steelers and Denver Broncos travel to Kansas City Chiefs.

The Bucs' appearance in the play-offs caps a remarkable upturn in fortunes for a team that was among the NFL's weakest until the appointment of Tony Dungey as first season produced a 6-10 record, but he has turned that around to 10-6 in his second, good enough for second place behind the Packers in

of which only 15 were allowed in a first half in which Tampa built up a 13-0 lead, helped by Horace Copeland's touchdown from a nine-yard pass by Trent Dilfer, the quarterback.

The Bucs moved 20-0 ahead early in the third quarter thanks to a 31-yard touchdown run by Mike Alstott. "Our defense stopped Barry Sanders and our offensive line kicked butt," Dilfer said.

Scott Mitchell, the quarterback, became the second Lions player in successive games to receive a serious injury. Mitchell left the field on a stretcher with concussion after a 20-minute delay but was able to walk into hospital for further examination. Last week the career of Reggie Brown, the linebacker, was ended by a head injury in the game against the Jets. Brown is now walking after fears that he might be permanently paralysed.

The Packers defeated Tampa Bay twice during the regular season but Dilfer said: "If we match their physicality and emotion, we can beat them."

A key factor in their win on Sunday was keeping in check Barry Sanders, who had passed the 2,000-yards rushing mark in Detroit's win over New York Jets the previous weekend and been voted the NFL's co-MVP [most valuable player] the day before. The Bucs restricted him to 65 yards in total.

PLAY-OFFS

Saturday, January 3
Pittsburgh Steelers v New England Patriots
San Francisco 49ers v Minnesota Vikings
Sunday, January 4
Baltimore Ravens v Green Bay Packers
Tampa Bay Buccaneers v Denver Broncos
Kansas City Chiefs v Denver Broncos

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BOWLS

Corsie to step down in surprise move

BY DAVID RHYS JONES

IN A surprise development, confirmed yesterday, Richard Corsie is to resign as chairman of the Professional Bowls Association (PBA) and is likely to be replaced at the annual meeting in Preston on January 18 by John Price, his vice-chairman.

These days the world of bowls is ostensibly all sweetness and light. During 1997, the indoor and outdoor governing bodies accepted the PBA's invitation to join them in a marketing initiative called the World Bowls Tour, in which the players have an equal voice with the administrators. However, some of the negotiations over the three years leading up to the merger were acrimonious and Corsie's pivotal role in the "quiet revolution" gave him many sleepless nights and certainly affected his form on the green.

"There is nothing sinister about it," Corsie said yesterday. "I simply feel we have achieved what we set out to do and feel it's time to spend more time with my family, attend to some of my business interests — and to get back to playing bowls."

Corsie, 30, won the world indoor singles title three times between 1989 and 1993, but his election as PBA chairman three years ago raised a few eyebrows and hackles, as he was succeeding the game's elder statesman, David Bryant.

Although Bryant, 66, kicked a few taboos in his time, his generation tended to accept authority. Corsie, who made his mark when he won the Scottish under-25 singles title in 1983, when he was 16, has often fallen foul of officialdom and has occasionally threatened to be the *enfant terrible* that perhaps a sport as gentle as bowls needs to give it credibility.

"It's true that Richard was never noted for his diplomacy," Price said yesterday, "but it was his ability to stand firm and speak out on behalf of the players that brought us so far down the line towards achieving our aims. We owe him a great deal."

Price believes that the responsibility weighed heavily on Corsie. "Richard put himself on the line so often that his form was bound to suffer," he said.

SPORT IN BRIEFS

Graf puts off her return

■ TENNIS: Steffi Graf, the former women's world No 1, will not play in the Australian Open, which begins on January 19. The 28-year-old German, four times a winner of the title, has not played since undergoing a knee operation in June, after which she was beaten by Amanda Coetzer in the French Open quarter-finals.

"I have decided not to compete in Australia because after such a long absence I do not feel in good enough form to do myself justice," she said yesterday.

■ ATHLETICS: Khalid Skah, the former Olympic 10,000 metres champion, will take part in the County Durham International cross country race on Saturday. The Moroccan was the centre of a dispute at the 1992 Olympics after being banned for allegedly receiving assistance from his team-mate, Hammou Boustayeb, then reinstated on appeal.

■ DARTS: Rod Harrington was delayed by a television computer fault before beating John Ferrel, 3-0 in his opening group match at the Skol world championship at Purfleet, Essex, yesterday.

■ TABLE TENNIS: Desmond Douglas is poised to return home to play for Darlington in the premier division of the British League. Douglas, 42, has commuted from his Walsall home to play for Rouen for three years. Darlington have offered him terms he is likely to accept.

■ BOXING: Paul Weir, of Scotland, will launch his bid for a third world flyweight title in Glasgow next month against an unnamed opponent.

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large season

THE TIMES TUESDAY DECEMBER 30 1997

SPORT 33

RACING: TWO PREVIOUS CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL WINNERS SHOW THEIR WELLBEING AT LEOPARDSTOWN

FROM CHRIS MCGRATH
AT LEOPARDSTOWN

IT WAS more property a day for swine, but instead there gleamed through the Leopardstown mire yesterday two pearls among the racehorses of Ireland. Both have already plundered the Cheltenham Festival once and, with any luck, they will be back in March, seeking another fragile cargo of dreams.

In Dorans Pride, the Irish already have the favourite for the Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup itself. Istabraq's similar status in the SunAlliance Champion Hurdle market took him to

RICHARD EVANS

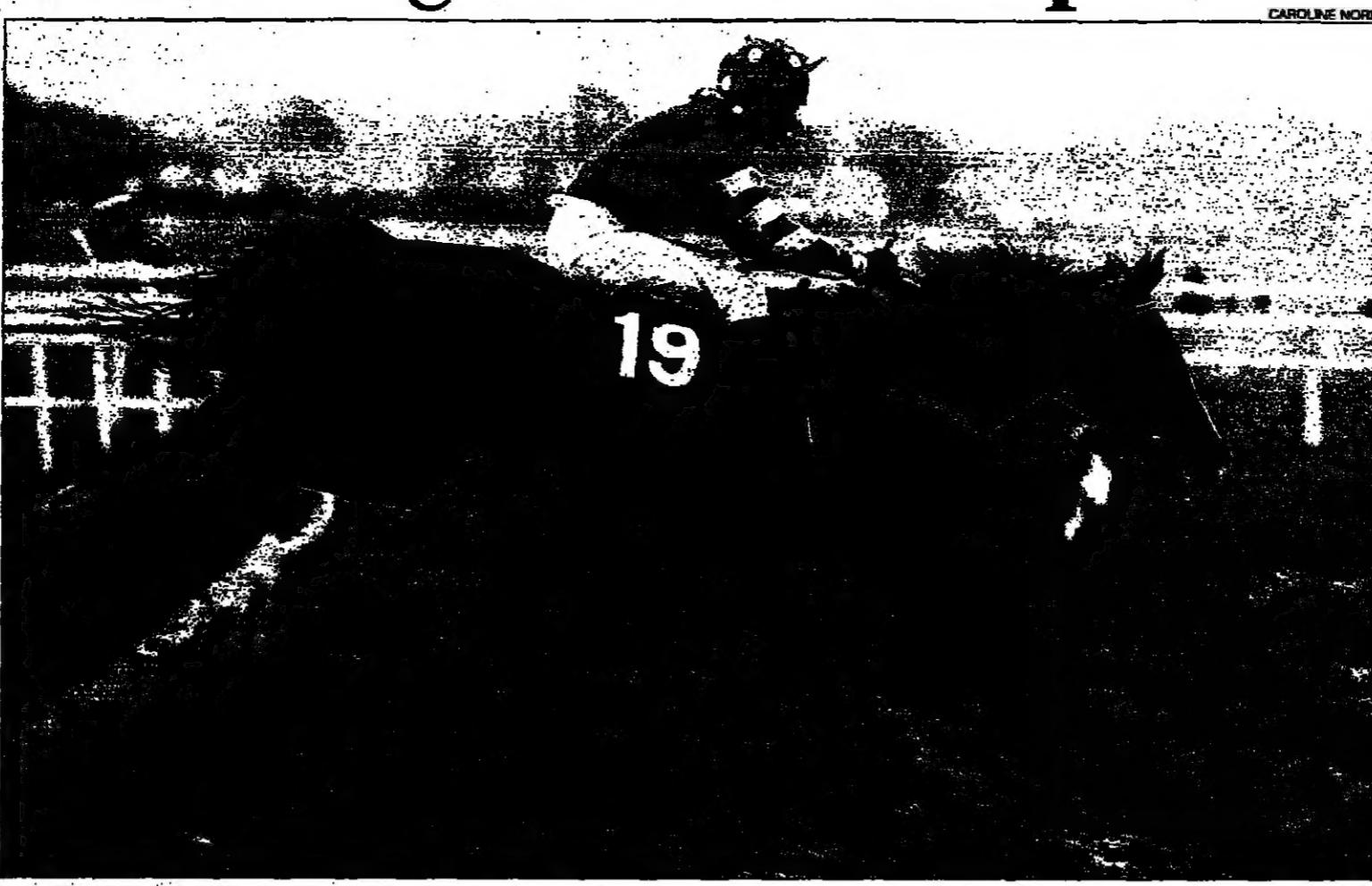
Nags: Pavlova (2.10 Plumpton)
Pavlova needs soft ground to show his best form and the Richard Rowe-trained chaser with 'trot' conditions in his favour today for the first time since winning in the Sussex track festival.

NB: Goodtime George (3.50 Stratford)

the top of yesterday's bill, but he all but had the show stolen by Florida Pearl.

Each had bravely justified daunting expectations last season, Istabraq landing the Royal SunAlliance Hurdle under a breathtaking ride from Charlie Swan and Florida Pearl turning airy talk into hard currency in the Festival Bumper.

While Istabraq's sauntering win, at 6-1, in the AIB Agribusiness December Hurdle revealed little — other than perhaps that Aidan O'Brien is nurturing a nurn of foot in his youth, Florida Pearl went



Florida Pearl, ridden by Dunwoody, clears the last on his way to an impressive winning debut over fences at Leopardstown yesterday

was something freshly marvellous about the performance of Florida Pearl.

While Mullins is shrewdly sparing his five-year-old the clattering ordeal of hurdles. From the family of Pearlyman and a point-to-point winner in his youth, Florida Pearl went

straight over fences in the Farming Independent Beginner's Chase — and with such aplomb that Richard Dunwoody declared him one of the best novices he has ridden.

The Ladbrokes representative duly felt able to preserve an unwaveringly straight face in

quoting him at 25-1 for the 1999 Gold Cup.

As if anticipating potential for a sacred festival 'banker', the crowds huddled round the paddock as soon as they discerned the white face of Florida Pearl emerging through the rain. When the 17

horses galloped into the muck, his blaze was soon glinting out of trouble, up in the van.

Jumping fluently, if prudently, he was in front by the sixth and there was only the briefest of challenges from Delphi Lodge running for home.

That rival was cruelly ex-

posed for his impudence, left floundering while Florida Pearl galloped down the straight. After jumping the last, moreover, he quickened away on his own initiative, winning by 20 lengths. "That's what most pleased me," Mullins said. "He really

hadn't given any allowance.

Florida Pearl's speed, like

the top of yesterday's bill, but he all but had the show stolen by Florida Pearl.

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Mystery with a thoroughly modern flavour

Which of us wasn't counting the minutes to last night's conclusion of *The Woman In White* (BBC1), having been left dangling by the great Callow cliffhanger? Yes, of course we had all realised, as Sunday's instalment was ending, that it was Simon Callow's dastardly Count Fosco who had betrayed Marian Fosco and her half-sister, Laura, to the hateful Sir Percival Glyde, but we were still unable to unravel Wilkie Collins' biggest mystery: how had roly-poly Simon Callow got so slim since we last saw him? And would he, like Nigel Lawson, now be publishing a diet book?

Actually, it's a triumph since every time Tara Fitzgerald's Marian appeared on screen it was hard to focus on anything else. Fitzgerald's face can say more in ten seconds than many actors manage in ten minutes: her eyes, like microdots, are loaded with an improbable

amount of coded, sensitive information, which she conveys with switches and glints. It made her the perfect pivot for a story that the BBC, cleverly, decided to fast-forward into two pacy episodes, rather than a dozen plodding ones — even though this meant denying us the pleasure of seeing the sinister (albeit slimmer) Fosco get his comeuppance.

And by giving Fitzgerald the punchiness of a plain-speaking, modern-day heroine, scriptwriter David Pirie not only rid Collins's story of some of the clichés of costume drama, apart that is, from casting James "frock-cost" Wilby as Glyde, but he injected it with the adrenaline of a contemporary thriller. This is in spite of the fact that the plot — which is powered by Sir Percival's ability effectively to impinge on his wife and Marian on his remote estate as he manouevres to kill Laura (Justine Waddell) for her inheritance —

would be pretty much impossible if, say, the telephone had existed in the mid-19th century. Mobile telephones, of course, would make the story even more of a nonsense, unless Sir Percival's estate happened to nestle in one of those spots that are a dead zone for Mercury One-2-One.

By taking Collins's story out of its museum case, Tim Fywell's direction conveyed more persuasively why *The Woman In White* created such a hubbub when it first came out. Perfumes, ships, dances and bonnets were named after it. Which stories today would inspire manufacturers in quite the same way? Officially licensed *Lion King* sweatshirts, yes; but probably not *English Patient* perfume, in spite of its Oscars; nor can one imagine *HMS The God Of Small Things*.

Hitler, depressingly, had consid-

erably more success with his murder plans than did Glyde. The *Lost Children of Berlin* (BBC2) brought together 50 or so survivors of the Grosse Hamburgerstrasse School, which once taught the children of prewar Berlin's 50,000-strong Jewish community, before the Gestapo diligently picked off the pupils and teachers, as though flicking urchins specks off their epaulettes. Each morning the

REVIEW

Joe Joseph

children would arrive to find another empty desk in the classroom where their best friend had sat only yesterday: or another teacher deported to a concentration camp. Sometimes it was their own fathers who had been stolen in the night. These were the children — fatherless, teacherless, friendless — for whom "Ich bin ein Berliner", John Kennedy's call for solidarity in the face of despotism, came 25 years too late.

The children learnt metalwork, not maths. "I didn't finish my education," recalls Israel Loewenthal, "I went to school only for seven years. Our head was not for studying, our head was for surviving." By 1942, all the surviving children could fit into one classroom. Then the school was closed down. The children tried to cling to life. Hans Radziewski, who had earned pocket money gardening in the cemetery, took refuge among the graves: "On some there were

loose covers. You could open them and hide in there. There were also graves that were to be used the next day. They were covered, so you could hide in those, too."

German schoolchildren still are taught how to spot any Jewish children still at large. There was even a book, *The Poison Mushroom*, which instructed them in the knack of detecting the poisonous mushroom from among the edible ones. Jews were portrayed as poisonous, and therefore a threat to the Nazi ideal of a racially pure Germany. To make detection even easier, all Jewish boys had to change their name to Israel, and all Jewish girls to Sarah. Oh yes, and Jewish kids were banned from keeping pets. And they had to wear a yellow star, too. For smart Aryans, those Nazis certainly required plenty of clues to help them along.

Elizabeth McIntrye's film ends with a former pupil, standing in the hall of the recently reopened and redecorated Grosse Hamburgerstrasse School, reciting names of long-dead classmates, killed in concentration camps. Strangely enough, the school's piano had survived intact.

Have I missed something? The footballer David Seaman turned up briefly in *Dame Edna Kisses It Better* on Boxing Day, and again last night in *Operation Good Guy* (BBC2), a slow-burner, spook-in-the-wall documentary, set in a police station. Has Seaman agreed to become a television version of *Where's Wally?* this Christmas, forcing him to make discreet guest appearances in everything from *Coronation Street* to *News At Ten*? Is there a telephone number viewers are supposed to call when we have noticed up ten sightings or something? I only ask.

BBC1

7.00am News (T) (225205) 7.15 Paddington Peas (228554) 7.40 The Best World of Richard Scarry (822168) 8.05 Casper Classics (542064) 8.30 Jonny Quest (119709) 8.55 The Blue Peter (T) (873933) 9.00 The Valley High (118224) 9.45 Teletubbies (972092) 10.20 News (T) (826126)

10.30 *The Shaggy Dog* (1989) Disney fantasy film comedy for children of all ages with Fred MacMurray and Tommy Kirk (77459)

12.00 Waiting for God (1985) Christmas edition (T) (16517)

12.30pm *Celebrity Ready, Steady, Cook* (T) (77788)

1.00 News (T) and weather (5097485)

1.15 *Neighbours* (T) (7019634)

1.35 *We're Bare! A Dinosaur's Story* (1993) Animated adventure featuring a host of famous voices, including John Goodman, Felicity Kendal and Rhea Perlman (209857)

2.40 *Way in Paradise* (T) (4463022)

3.10 *The World's Strongest Man* Last semi-final (T) (728769)

3.40 *Battle to Africa* The Comic Relief all-star football team (T) (6162769)

4.30 *Tom and Jerry* (7323740)

4.40 *A Flintstones Family Christmas* (209857)

5.05 *Neverendum* (T) (9755618)

5.35 *Neighbours* (T) (7047034)

6.00 *News (T)* and weather (855450)

6.30 *Watchdog: House Style* presented by Anne McEvitt (T) (5035)

7.00 *Holiday Post-holiday* Hong Kong Driving School's Marmite Run on a fly-drive visit to Spain; the Italian resort of Viareggio; a weekend in Suffolk (7082)

7.30 *EastEnders*: Grant and Phil fight to build a new bridge with their wives (T) (169)

8.00 *Mrs Doubtfire* (1993) Robin Williams as a man who poses as a female to become a nanny to his own children when his wife walks out on him. With Pierce Brosnan and Sally Field. Directed by Chris Columbus (T) Continued after the News (508)

9.00 *News (T)* and weather (5479)

9.30 *Film: Mrs Doubtfire* Concluded (T) (47249-5)

10.30 *Review of the Year* David Dimbleby looks back on the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, as well as other memorable events of 1997: Labour's return to power after an absence of 18 years; Hong Kong's return to China; the vote for devolution in Scotland and Wales (T) (939594)

11.45 *Carry On the Khyber* (1988) One of the best of the *Carry On* series. Set in Film India as the plot of the British Raj having trouble with a native revolt. Directed by Gerald Thomas (441653)

1.15 *Sam A. Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square* (1979) Richard Jordan, David Niven, Glenda Jackson, Star in a crime caper based on a true story. Directed by Richard Thomas (513124)

2.55 *Weather* (2649597)

3.00 BBC News 24

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VideoPlus+ and the Video-PlusCodes

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BBC2

7.05am *Klaes Chronicing the history of the screen* (T) (7657765)

7.50 *The Phil Silvers Show* (b/w) (T) (6841547)

8.15 *Great Mysteries and Myths of the 20th Century*: Mata Hari (9227678)

8.40 *22nd Street* (1933) Classic Busby Berkley-choreographed musical about Broadway with Warner Baxter, Ruby Keeler and a young Ginger Rogers. Directed by Lloyd Bacon (1467940)

10.05 *The Great Romances of the 20th Century* Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford (T) (7418498)

10.35 *The Stratton Story* (1949) James Stewart stars as Monty Stratton, a talented baseball player. With June Allyson, Agnes Moorehead. Directed by Sam Wood (19146011)

11.00 *Perfect Day* (8614301)

12.00 *Cambridge Folk Festival* (263) Richard Thompson, Jackson Browne, Alain Clark Sound System (4142633)

1.10 *Fireman Sam* (33357108)

1.20 *The Royal Institution Christmas Lectures: The Magical Maze* (3/5) (2834363)

2.20 *The Crimson Pirate* (1952) Burt Lancaster stars as an 18th-century pirate, with James Hayter. Directed by Robert Stodola (9271169)

3.00 *Everything to Play For* Last in series (818)

3.40 *Veru Cruz* (1954) Western, with Gary Cooper, Burt Lancaster and Ernest Borgnine. Directed by Robert Aldrich (58294)

5.00 *The Man Who Never Was* (1956) Fact-based wartime drama with Clifton Webb, Gloria Grahame, Robert Flemyng, Stephen Boyd. Directed by Ronald Neame (4784258)

7.43 *Perfumed Day* (T) (293450)

7.45 *UWU: Challenge Britain v US* (T) (801672)

8.15 *The Travel Show* Winter holidays in North and Central America (505769)

8.00 *Modern Times: The Shrine* A study of the mourners who flock to pay their respects to Diana, Princess of Wales (1020030)

10.15 *Stella Street* (281672)

Vangelis Annette Bening (10.25pm)

10.25 *Velmont* (1989) Period drama about the antics of two lecherous 18th-century aristocrats as they plot the seduction of a virtuous virgin, who also happens to be planning her wedding to a rival. With Annette Bening and Colin Firth in an adaptation of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* directed by Miles Forman (6084924)

12.35pm *Women in Love* (1989) With Glenda Jackson, Alan Bates, Oliver Reed, Jennie Linden. Ken Russell's film based on the novel by D.H. Lawrence (176763)

2.35 *Weather* (3650073)

3.00 BBC News 24

HTV

6.00am GMTV (2152672)

9.25 *The Fantastic Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor* (1652769)

9.55 *Regional News* (T) (408011)

10.20 *Frankenstein* (16363)

10.30 *Daryl* (1985) with Mary Beth Hurt, Michael McKean and Barrett Oliver. A couple adopt a ten-year-old boy, little realising that he is, in fact, a robot. Directed by Simon Wincer (T) (9799031)

12.20pm *Regional News* (8690992)

12.30 *News (T)* and weather (5702314)

12.55 *Baywatch: The Runaway* (T) (284024)

1.30 *Cartoon Time* (T) (7548498)

1.40 *Joe Versus the Volcano* (1990) Tom Hanks, as a man who accepts a bizarre proposition when told he has six months to live. Also with Meg Ryan and Lloyd Bridges. Directed by John Patrick Shanley (T) (6123479)

3.30 *News (T)* and weather (2547789)

3.40 *Regional News* (8695059)

3.45 *Three Amigos!* (1986) Comedy western starring Chevy Chase, Steve Martin and Martin Short as heroes heroes of the silent screen. Directed by John Landis (T) (286721)

5.40 *News (T)* and weather (657479)

5.00 *The Bad Man: Pins and Needles and Casualty/Babysitting* (491276)

5.25 *Regional Weather* (300585)

5.30 *News (T)* and weather (5702312)

5.35 *Meridian* (284024)

5.40 *Meridian* (284024)

5.45 *Meridian Tonight* (721)

6.00 *Meridian The Badly Man* (301)

7.30-8.00 *Great Places of the South* (585)

As HTV West except:
12.55-1.30 *Shortland Street* (284024)

6.00 *Meridian Tonight* (721)

7.30-8.00 *Great Places of the South* (585)

1.14 *Anglia Air Watch* (552295)

Starts: 6.00am *Sesame Street* (82127)

7.00 *The Babysitters' Club* (9161450)

7.35 *Two Stupid Dogs* (8221214)

8.00 *The Big Breakfast* (1818)

10.00 *Zig and Zag's Big Morning* (9631011)

10.41 *Happy Days* (5094365)

10.45 *Saved by the Bell* (1167450)

11.05 *Mousa* (2267108)

11.30 *The Monkees* (8263636)

12.05pm *Coping With* (2097011)

12.35 *Earle, Indiana* (5700127)

1.00 *Slot Meltin* (5097568)

1.15 *Pingu* (50855721)

1.30 *Boo Meets World* (12450)

2.00 *A Woman of Substance* (3130)

4.00 *Bewitched* (214)

4.30 *Countdown* (498)

5.00 *5 Pump: United* (5603160)

5.40 *Credyn'eur* Byd Wedi Eu Hanmerland Florid y Breda (549721)

6.00 *Newyddion 6* (864106)

6.10 *Hans* (240740)

7.00 *Pobol y Cwm* (512653)

7.25 *Gloriannu Llangoed* (5337943)

8.30 *Brodinol Dimon* (8585)

9.00 *Cyngyrn yr Adar* (1022498)

10.15 *Newyddion* (502063)

10.30 *Brookside* (183452)

11.05 *And Finally - Rory Bremner* (474498)

12.10pm *Nobody Does It Better: The Music of James Bond* (8203054)

1.10 *Smash It Up!* (9761238)

1.15 *Mr White Goes to Westminster* (9238857)

2.20pm *Cronos* (1992) A horror movie starring Federico Luppi and Claudio Brook, set in Mexico City. An elderly antiques dealer is transformed into a vampire and granted eternal life. Directed by Guillermo del Toro. In English and Spanish with subtitles (960290)

2.00 *Mission: Impossible* (35861)

3.00 *Brother: Orchid* (1940, b/w) starring Edward G. Robinson and Humphrey Bogart. A comedy thriller about a gangster determined to be reinstated as the boss of his crime empire. Directed by Lloyd Bacon (402328)

4.35-6.00 *The Hatchet Man* (1932, b/w) starring Edward G. Robinson. A drama about the San Francisco Tong wars. Directed by William A. Wellman (23476702)

5.00 *Smash It Up!* (9761238)

6.00 *Mr White Goes to Westminster* (9151610)

7.00 *Too Young to Die* (1990) With Juliette Lewis as a young woman facing the death penalty for the murder of her lover. Robert Markowitz directs (4803219)

8.00 *Vanessa's Day* With Vanessa Feltz spends her day with Neil and Christine Hamilton (751468)

8.30 *5 News* (T) (5760905)

9.00 *Mr White Goes to Westminster* (9238857)

10.00 *Smash It Up!* The story of some of the people caught up in popular political protest (T) (415160)

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RUGBY UNION 31

Newcastle's charge to the top under threat from Leicester

SPORT

TUESDAY DECEMBER 30 1997

Selectors prefer Atherton as one-day captain



Atherton: regained control

ADAM HOLLOOKE will not, after all, continue in charge of England's one-day side. Widespread expectation that his reward for winning the Champions Trophy in Sharjah would come with his reappointment for the limited-overs series in the West Indies proved misplaced yesterday when the selectors instead selected Michael Atherton.

The surprise announcement was made by the chairman of selectors, David Graveney, at a hotel near Gatwick where the England A team players were gathering before departing for Kenya and Sri Lanka. The management team for that tour comprises Graveney's fellow selectors, Graham Good and Mike Gatting, and their views were undoubtedly paramount in the decision.

The two former England captains apparently expressed reservations about the concept of dividing the

position between two men. Plainly, there was a fear that the authority of the overall captain might be diminished. Atherton, therefore, will retain control for the full 14-week stay in the Caribbean where, ironically, he is at present on holiday.

Hollooake, who will be his vice-captain for the five-match one-day series, put a brave face on what must have come as a shock. "It was obviously a difficult decision for the selectors," he said. His consolation is that all but two of his victorious Sharjah party will be involved. Of the 13-man squad named yesterday, seven will be flown in specifically for the limited-overs games.

Only Alistair Brown and Peter Marin have been omitted from the Sharjah contingent, but the ten members of the full West Indies tour party missing from the 13 will not all automatically be sent home. Up to three of them may be added to the

BY ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT

one-day party at a later date and Darren Gough, the most notable omission, is an obvious candidate.

The selectors have acted with admirable clarity in making their verdict public before the tour begins, the idea being to pre-empt prolonged and distracting speculation. It is now, however, an issue that is unlikely to disappear for the very valid reason that the selectors may have got it wrong.

There was good cause for continuing the experiment with Hollooake and it had nothing to do with the inevitable overreaction to victory in Sharjah. The protection and preservation of Atherton for the more grave business of Test cricket was a powerful motivation and there must now be a danger that he will come to regret this show of loyalty.

It is not that Atherton dislikes

scrutinised harshly against the pop-up attractions of Hollooake.

Graveney was insistent that the decision had been unanimous and that there had been no change of thinking. "I said in Sharjah that we must go away and talk about it," he said. "It was being widely written up that Adam would keep the job, but it was never said by any of us."

So widely was it being reported, indeed, that the Cefax service erroneously carried a story, two weeks ago, confirming Hollooake's reappointment. Graveney, the tour manager in Sharjah, quickly had this removed but the impression remained strong that the decision only required official corroboration.

Atherton, who was telephoned in Jamaica by Graveney yesterday, had done no more than express a preference that the matter should be resolved quickly. Losing the leadership of the one-day side would not

CRICKET 34

Australia push back boundaries to win women's world title



Problems increase for head coach

Gross's future at Tottenham under a cloud

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

FURTHER doubt was cast over the future of Christian Gross as head coach of Tottenham Hotspur yesterday when the Department for Education and Employment turned down the application for a work permit for Fritz Schmid, Gross's fitness adviser.

When Gross joined Tottenham last month, he emphasised the need for a specialist trainer at White Hart Lane and that he wanted to bring over Schmid from Grasshopper, their former club in Zurich.

Gross's turbulent 40-day reign at White Hart Lane received another setback when Les Ferdinand, the Tottenham striker, voiced concern about having been told to train on Christmas Day, despite having sustained a bruised thigh in the 3-0 victory against Barnsley on December 20. Ferdinand claimed that the injury then worsened and, consequently, he was forced to miss the matches against Aston Villa and Arsenal.

Little has gone right for Gross since he succeeded Gerry Francis on November 20. Tottenham have won only two of the six matches under his

guidance, losing three times and conceding 15 goals, and have slipped to nineteenth in the FA Carling Premiership. Although the arrival of Jürgen Klinsmann has helped to deflect some of the criticism, Gross will be particularly unhappy at the Employment Department's decision.

Schmid, 38, is a close friend of Gross and worked alongside him at Grasshopper. A former youth and reserve team player with the club, he completed his studies in physi-

cal education at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich and has an extensive knowledge of sports medicine and injury rehabilitation.

Gross had hoped that the work permit would be processed swiftly but it was complicated by the fact that Schmid, like Gross, is Swiss. Switzerland is not a member of the European Union and, therefore, the usual rules allowing freedom of movement within the European Community do not apply.

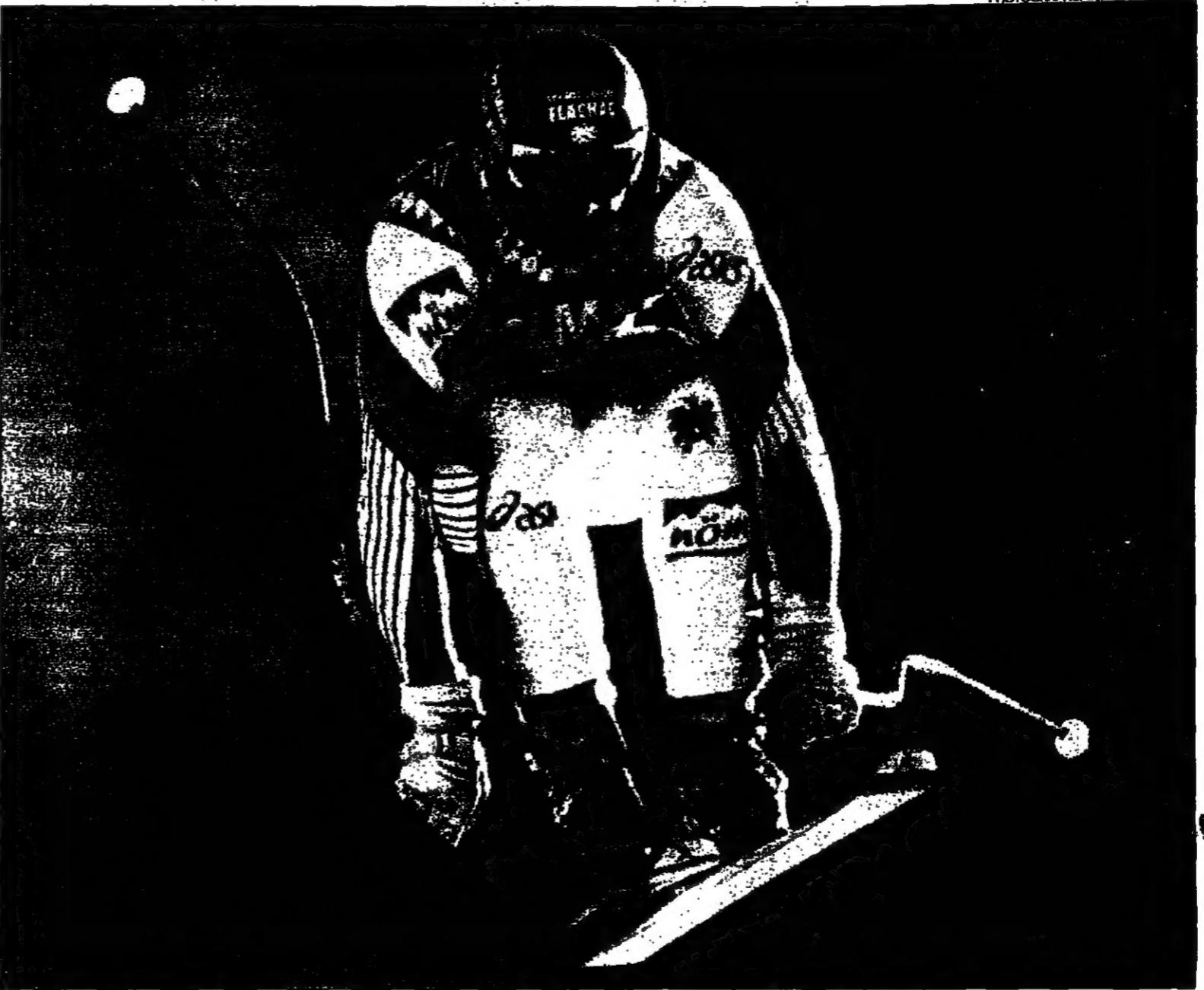
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Pierre Benoit, chief of communications for the Swiss FA, said yesterday: "Christian was a candidate before he moved to Tottenham but not any more. There have been no discussions, there is no possibility of him coming back here. We are still looking."

Benoit said that Gross appeared happy in London, though that is unlikely to be the case when he hears the comments of Ferdinand. The England striker had a scan on his injured thigh yesterday and could be out for a month.

"I had rested my leg for a few days I probably could have played against Arsenal, but I was made to train through it," Ferdinand said. "I trained on Christmas Day, tried to shoot and felt it go. There's muscle damage and a lot of blood under the surface of the skin."



Maier flies through the air on his way to victory in the men's downhill in Bormio yesterday, a result that extended his overall World Cup lead

Maier takes honours as Austrians dominate again

HERMANN MAIER won the men's World Cup downhill race at the Italian resort of Bormio yesterday. It was his first downhill triumph and he led an Austrian sweep of the first four places.

The 25-year-old former bricklayer scored his third World Cup victory of the season, recording a time of 2min 01.59sec to increase his lead in the overall standings.

Andreas Schifferer was second, three hundredths of a second back, and Werner Franz third, a further fifth of a second behind. Stefan Eberharter was fourth.

The Austrians have dominated the early-season Alpine events, leading up to the Olympic Games in Nagano in February, and yesterday filled seven of the first ten places on a tight, twisting, technical Stelvio course. Maier, who also has super giant and giant slalom wins to his credit this season, is fast emerging as a great all-rounder.

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BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

The race was the first World Cup downhill since December 5 — when Maier finished second behind Schifferer — and is followed by a second downhill at Bormio today.

I have to admit I'm a little surprised to have won," Maier said. "My tactics were to take it relatively easy today and then go for victory tomorrow. I made a few mistakes near the bottom and I found it difficult to see. One minute I was in sunlight, the next in darkness and I very nearly lost it completely."

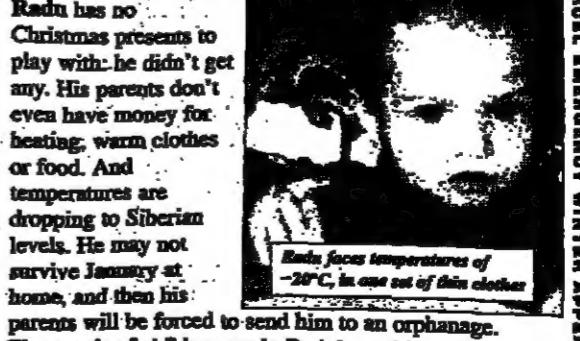
Maier said he almost decided to skip Bormio to concentrate on the giant slalom and super giant race — his favourite events — scheduled for Slovenia and Austria in early January. "Then I saw how icy and fast the course was and I thought I'd give it a go to try to get more World Cup points," he said.

Schifferer said: "I made mistakes on the upper part of the course, so I have to be happy with second. This confirms my victory at Beaver Creek wasn't just a one-off and I hope I can go from here to pick up points in the slaloms."

Melquond: injured

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Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

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Telephone no.

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Sheffield United get shirty with Taylor

CHRISTMAS is clearly over at Bramall Lane, where the spirit of Scrooge overlooks any sense of goodwill on Sunday. The festive story centres on Gareth Taylor, the Sheffield United forward.

The 24-year-old bade what he thought was his farewell to the United supporters, with a £700,000 move to Utrecht, Holland, in the offing in an emotional scene in front of the Kop. After scoring in the 4-1 defeat of Charlton Athletic, he tearfully offered his shirt to a young boy in the crowd.

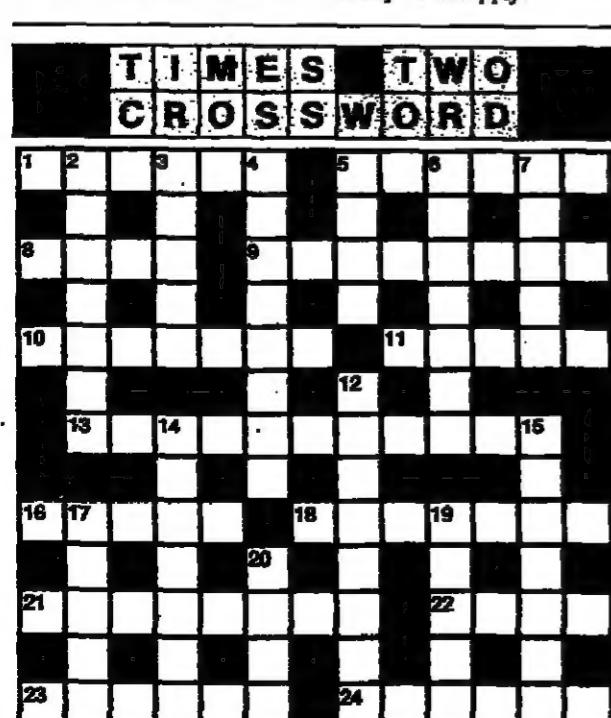
BY DAVID MADDOCK

Taylor himself now takes up the story. "I went back into the dressing room feeling a little bit emotional because I thought that was my final game. But the manager came up to me and said that the shirt was the property of the club and I would be charged £40 for giving it away."

Times are hard at Sheffield United, which is why they were prepared to sell Taylor in the first place, but asking him to pay for the shirt — surely it could

not be true? Yes it is, according to Nigel Spackman, the manager. "You can make what you like of what Gareth did — all it means to me is that he will get the bill for the new shirt," he said.

And our story does not have a happy ending, either. The proposed move has now been placed on hold because, according to Spackman, they have also had interest registered in Jan Aage Fjørtoft and Spackman is prepared to allow only one forward to leave the club. Who said that the spirit of Christmas is dead?



ACROSS
1 Frank, honest (6)
2 Keep several balls in air (6)
3 Door-frame side (4)
4 Secondary occupation (8)
5 Climbing-plant frame (7)
11 Insipid (5)
13 Disturb (settled situation) (4,3,4)
16 Transparency; slither (5)
18 Dime; puzzling (7)
21 Wrist ornament (3)
22 Useless; conceited (4)
23 Charlie —; Lord Jim narrator (Conrad) (6)
24 Jacob —, Scrooge's partner (Dickens) (6)

DOWN
1 Sustain (5)
2 Non-professional (7)
3 Fix (computer program) (5)
4 Uninhabited; friendless (6)
5 NT epistle: — the 18, Hardy (4)
6 Ft. astronomer. Inquisition victim (7)
7 Vladimir Ilyich —, Bolshevik (5)
12 Word for word (8)
14 Will addendum (7)
15 Coarse plate (7)
17 Immature insect form (5)
19 Protect; deal with (5)
20 Bird's nail (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1289
ACROSS: 1 Sustain 5 Scalp 8 Acute 9 Cuirass 10 Walk the plank 12 Reside 14 Apathy 17 All systems go 21 Cuisine 22 Idols 23 Shell 24 Turnus
DOWN: 1 Stalwart 2 Skull 3 Abetted 4 Nickel 5 Skill 6 Against 7 Dish 11 Synopsis 13 Saldre 15 Premium 16 Aspect 18 Skirt 19 Scowl 20 Ices

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